United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

(Eighteenth and nineteenth sessions)

General Assembly
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Fifty-third session
Supplement No. 38 (A/53/38/Rev.1)

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Part One

Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its eighteenth session

Letter of transmittal

6 February 1998

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, according to which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, established pursuant to the Convention, "shall, through the Economic and Social Council, report annually to the General Assembly of the United Nations on its activities".

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held its eighteenth session from 19 January to 6 February 1998 at United Nations Headquarters. It adopted its report on the session at its 383rd meeting, on 6 February. The report of the Committee is herewith submitted to you for transmission to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Salma **Khan**
Chairperson
Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women

Chapter I

Matters brought to the attention of States parties

A. Decisions[*]

Decision 18/I. Participation in the pre-session working group

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women decided that representatives of the specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations, as well as national and international non-governmental organizations, should be invited to provide country-specific information to the pre-session working group on those States parties whose reports were before the group.

Decision 18/II. Specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women decided that representatives of the specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations should be invited to address the Committee as a whole in a closed meeting on those States parties whose initial reports were before the Committee.

Decision 18/III. Consideration of reports

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reaffirmed its past practice that members of the Committee should refrain from participating in any aspect of the consideration of the reports of the States of which they were nationals in order to maintain the highest standards of impartiality, both in substance and appearance.

B. Suggestion[*]

Suggestion 18/I. Timing of pre-session working group

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women proposed that the pre-session working group should meet at the end of the previous session. It proposed that the transition to this pattern of work should take place at its twentieth session, in January 1999.

Chapter II

Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. On 6 February 1998, the closing date of the eighteenth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, there were 161 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York in March 1980. In accordance with article 27, the Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981.

2. A list of States parties to the Convention is contained in annex I to the present report.

B. Opening of the session

3. The Committee held its eighteenth session at United Nations Headquarters from 19 January to 6 February 1998. The Committee held 24 plenary meetings (360th to 383rd), and its two working groups each held 9 meetings.

4. The session was opened by the Chairperson of the Committee, Ms. Salma Khan (Bangladesh).

5. Addressing the Committee on behalf of the Secretary-General, the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women noted that the progress achieved since the entry into force of the Convention should not be a cause for complacency. The Convention was still subject to a large number of reservations and even though laws and policies to implement the Convention had been introduced, de facto implementation was still impeded by entrenched attitudes that were in contradistinction to the principles of the Convention. It was in bridging the gap between ratification and implementation that the Committee's work was crucial and the success of the Convention would be determined. Looking ahead, she would also welcome the views of members of the Committee on ways to encourage Member States that had not yet done so to ratify the Convention by the year 2000. That would meet one of the goals of the

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[*] For the discussion, see chap. V below.

Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women.

6. She stressed that, with the two annual sessions of the Committee, which would strengthen its visibility and allow greater opportunities for clear elaboration of the obligations of the Convention, the possibilities for full implementation were enhanced. High expectations had been created requiring renewed commitment from Committee members both during sessions and inter-sessionally.

7. The Special Adviser informed the Committee that the 10th meeting of States Parties to the Convention would be held on 17 February 1998, to elect 12 Committee members for a four-year term from 1 January 1999.

8. She informed the Committee that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would meet with the Committee on 4 February 1998 and that that meeting would provide an opportunity to discuss the anniversary of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the strengthening of the goals and the work of the treaty bodies in respect of gender. She also reported that the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences, had regretted her inability to attend the eighteenth session as planned, but that the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief would address the Committee on 28 January 1998.

9. The Special Adviser informed the Committee that, as a result of the implementation of the Secretary-General's reform proposals, the Division for the Advancement of Women was now part of a new department, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, whose mandate was to focus on work in the area of normative, analytical and advisory services. It would also monitor, analyse and assess economic and social policies and trends from a global as well as a gender perspective.

10. The Special Adviser also informed the Committee about the expert group meetings which the Division had organized or co-hosted on the themes "Adolescent girls and their rights", "Gender-based persecution", "Women's enjoyment of economic and social rights" and "Caregiving for older persons - Gender dimensions", in preparation for the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

11. She also informed the Committee that, in her capacity as Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, she had participated in a round table on the theme "Crimes of sexual violence", held at Arusha from 4 to 6 October 1997, and had led the United Nations Inter-agency Gender Mission to Afghanistan from 12 to 21 November 1997. In that connection, she noted that the women of Afghanistan were not alone in experiencing violations of their human rights and that women and girls around the world, particularly in conflict situations such as in Rwanda, Burundi and Algeria, were especially at risk. Strategies were needed to address such violations.

C. Attendance

12. Twenty-one members of the Committee attended the session. Ms. Desirée Bernard attended from 19 to 23 January, Ms. Silvia Cartwright from 19 to 23 January and 29 January to 6 February, Ms. Aída González from 22 January to 6 February, Ms. Ginko Sato from 2 to 6 February and Ms. Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling from 27 January to 6 February 1998. Not in attendance were Ms. Tendai Ruth Bare and Ms. Mervat Tallawy.

13. A list of the members of the Committee, together with an indication of the duration of their term of office, is contained in annex II to the present report.

D. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

14. The Committee considered the provisional agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/1998/I/1 and Corr.1) at its 360th meeting, on 19 January 1998. The agenda as adopted was as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the seventeenth and eighteenth sessions of the Committee.
4. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
5. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.
7. Provisional agenda for the nineteenth session.

8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its eighteenth session.

E. Report of the pre-session working group

15. The Committee had decided, at its ninth session,[1] to convene a pre-session working group for five days before each session to prepare lists of questions relating to second and subsequent periodic reports that would be considered by the Committee at the session.

16. The following four members, representing different regional groups, participated in the working group: Emna Aouij (Africa), Ivanka Corti (Europe), Yolanda Ferrer (Latin America and the Caribbean) and Sunaryati Hartono (Asia and the Pacific).

17. The Working Group prepared lists of issues and questions relating to the subsequent reports of four States parties, namely, Bulgaria, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia and Mexico.

18. At the 365th meeting, on 22 January 1998, the Chairperson of the pre-session working group introduced the report of the group (CEDAW/C/1998/I/CRP.1 and Add.1-4). She informed members that for the first time the pre-session working group had invited representatives of the specialized agencies to provide it with information with regard to the countries under review. The following participated: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In the light of the information provided, the working group agreed to suggest to the Committee that this practice be adopted as a normal practice of pre-session working groups.

19. The Chairperson of the pre-session working group also informed the Committee that the group had invited representatives of national and international non-governmental organizations, on an experimental basis, to provide it with information with respect to the States parties under review. The Chairperson of the group indicated that the group was recommending that this practice also be adopted as a normal practice of pre-session working groups.

20. The Committee took note of the report of the pre-session working group and agreed that representatives of the specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations, as well as national and international non-governmental organizations, should be invited to provide country-specific information to the pre-session working group on those States parties whose reports were before the group.

F. Composition and organization of work of the working groups

21. At its 360th meeting, on 19 January 1998, the Committee agreed on the composition of its two standing working groups: Working Group I, to consider ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee, and Working Group II, to consider ways and means of implementing article 21 of the Convention.

22. Working Group I was composed of the following members of the Committee: Ayse Feride Acar, Emna Aouij, Desirée Bernard, Silvia Cartwright, Ivanka Corti, Aurora Javate de Dios, Yolanda Ferrer Gómez, Aída González, Salma Khan, Yung-Chung Kim, Lin Shangzhen, Ahoua Ouedraogo, Anne Lise Ryel, Ginko Sato and Kongit Sinegiorgis.

23. Working Group II was composed of the following members of the Committee: Charlotte Abaka, Carlota Bustelo, Silvia Cartwright, Aurora Javate de Dios, Aída González, Sunaryati Hartono, Lin Shangzhen, Ahoua Ouedraogo and Carmel Shalev.

24. The specific issues addressed by Working Groups I and II were the following:

(a) Working Group I: Relations with the specialized agencies and other United Nations entities; the relationship between the Committee and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and other non-conventional human rights mechanisms of the United Nations; relevant issues considered at the eighth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, held at Geneva from 15 to 19 September 1997; the report on enhancing the long-term effectiveness of the United Nations human rights treaty body system, prepared by the independent expert, Mr. Philip Alston; recommendations made to the Committee by the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the relevant recommendations from expert group meetings convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women since the seventeenth session of the Committee; and promotion of the Convention and the work of the Committee through technical and advisory services and reports to be considered at the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first sessions of the Committee;

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 38* and corrigendum (A/45/38 and Corr.1), paras. 28-31.

(b) Working Group II: Draft general recommendation on article 12 of the Convention on women and health and the contribution of the Committee to the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the form of a paper on reservations to the Convention.

Chapter III

Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the seventeenth and eighteenth sessions of the Committee

25. The Chairperson of the Committee welcomed members to the eighteenth session of the Committee. She noted that, since the last session of the Committee, Ms. Tendai Bare (Zimbabwe) had been appointed Director of the General Technical Services Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London and was submitting her resignation. She emphasized the valuable contribution that Ms. Bare had made to the work of the Committee.

26. She informed the Committee that she had participated in a number of United Nations-sponsored activities, including the Asia/Pacific Meeting on Universal Adherence to Principal Human Rights Instruments, held in Amman from 1 to 4 September 1997, which had been convened by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The object of the meeting had been to encourage ratification of human rights instruments. She noted that 17 of the States that had participated in the meeting had not yet ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The meeting had offered a useful opportunity to identify obstacles to ratification and strategies to overcome them.

27. The Chairperson had attended the eighth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies held at Geneva from 15 to 19 September 1997. She reported that the major item on the agenda of the meeting had been the report of the independent expert on "enhancing the long-term effectiveness of the United Nations human rights treaty system". The chairpersons had considered that it was both impractical and undesirable to create a single treaty body to monitor all the human rights conventions. They were of the view that each committee might seek ways to focus on a limited number of issues pertinent to each country to help reduce the length of periodic reports. The chairpersons had recommended that members of treaty bodies should refrain from participating in any aspect of the consideration of their country's report in order to maintain impartiality, both in substance and appearance, and that Governments should refrain from nominating persons for election to treaty bodies whose political or other functions may not be reconcilable with the obligations of independent experts. The chairpersons had invited the Division for the Advancement of Women to prepare an analysis of how gender was being integrated into the work of the United Nations treaty bodies for presentation at the next regular session of the meeting of chairpersons and had proposed holding a seminar to explore these issues.

28. The Chairperson also informed the Committee about the Copenhagen Seminar for Social Progress, held from 3 to 5 October 1997, the objective of which had been to follow up the 1996 World Summit for Social Development and determine the relationship between the process of economic integration and globalization and social conditions. From 14 to 16 October 1997, the Chairperson had also attended a regional workshop organized by the Middle East regional office of the United Nations Children's Fund in Beirut, which had examined ways to incorporate Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child into the curriculum of law schools in six Arab States. The concept of women's and children's rights in the Arab world had been discussed.

29. The Chairperson had attended the meetings of the Third Committee of the General Assembly from 19 to 23 October 1997. In her statement, she had highlighted the progress that had been made in the implementation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and had called for further ratification and acceptance of the amendment of article 20, paragraph 1, relating to the Committee's meeting time.

30. The Chairperson informed the Committee that she had written to those countries that were not yet parties to the Convention, urging ratification by the year 2000. Moreover, she welcomed the fact that the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women had written to those States parties which had not submitted their initial reports, urging their swift compliance with this obligation. She noted with appreciation that Mr. James Gustav Speth, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, had written to resident coordinators requesting them to encourage Governments to ratify or comply with reporting obligations under the Convention and to assist where needed in the preparation of initial reports.

31. The Chairperson reported that she and three other members of the Committee had attended the Commonwealth Medical Association interregional round table on women's health convened in London on 15 and 16 November 1997. The round table, which had been preceded by a "day of dialogue" with non-governmental organizations involved in health and reproductive rights, had provided useful input to the Committee in its formulation of a general recommendation relating to article 12.

32. The Chairperson noted her concern about the situation of women and children in Algeria and that the initial report of that country was under preparation and would be considered by the Committee at one of its coming sessions.

33. She also expressed disappointment that the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, had been unable to attend the session as originally planned, but noted that the Special Rapporteur on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief would be meeting with the Committee, as would Mrs. Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. She thanked Ms. Cartwright and Ms. Shalev who had carried out major responsibilities on behalf of the Committee between the seventeenth and eighteenth sessions with regard to a paper on reservations and the general recommendation on women's health.

34. Finally, the Chairperson noted that, while there had been improvements in the functioning of treaty bodies, working methods of the Committee could be further improved and she welcomed any suggestions in that regard.

Chapter IV
Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

A. Introduction

35. At its eighteenth session, the Committee considered the reports submitted by eight States parties under article 18 of the Convention: four initial reports; two combined second and third periodic reports; one combined second, third and fourth periodic report; and one combined third and fourth periodic report.

36. As decided at its thirteenth session, in 1994, the Committee prepared concluding comments on each report considered. The Committee's concluding comments on the reports of States parties, as prepared by the members of the Committee, and a summary of the introductory presentations by the representatives of the States parties are provided below. The summary records provide more detailed information on the Committee's consideration of the reports of the States parties.

B. Consideration of reports of States parties

1. Initial reports

Azerbaijan

37. The Committee considered the initial report of Azerbaijan (CEDAW/C/AZE/1) at its 361st, 362nd and 367th meetings on 20 and 23 January 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.361, 362 and 367).

38. The representative of the Government informed the Committee that 20 January is the Azeri national day to commemorate the victims of totalitarianism. The adoption by the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijani Republic of the Declaration on the Restoration of the State Independence of the Azerbaijani Republic, on 30 August 1991, and the Constitutional Act of State Independence, on 18 October 1991, formed part of the outcome of the struggle for independence.

39. The implementation of socio-economic and political reforms commenced upon independence, but, according to the representative of the Government, the situation in the country has been affected by the socio-economic crisis and Armenia's armed aggression, which has had an impact on the whole population. In addition, 85 per cent of the population remains below the poverty line. There is also a large population of refugees and displaced persons, including women and children.

40. In spite of those difficulties, the Government attaches great importance to the implementation of international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which the Government had acceded without any reservations in June 1995. The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995, and the follow-up implementation at the national level has also been important in the context of women's rights in Azerbaijan.

41. The initial report of Azerbaijan was prepared one year after its accession to the Convention during a period of economic difficulties, the occupation of 20 per cent of the

territory of Azerbaijan and the existence of more than a million refugees and displaced persons. Those factors have had a negative effect on the implementation of the Convention.

42. The representative of Azerbaijan provided a comprehensive retrospective analysis of the changes in the situation of women in the country and paid tribute to the contributions of prominent women in that process.

43. A special State committee on women's issues has been established recently, and the Government is actively pursuing the policy of equal rights and equal opportunities. That approach forms the basis for interaction with non-governmental organizations.

44. The Committee was informed that the new constitution, adopted in 1995, underscores the principle of equality of human rights of men and women. *De jure*, women enjoy full guarantees of human rights and freedom from discrimination. The difficult socio-economic situation, however, has resulted in a severe decline in the standard of living and an increase in the unemployment rate. This has resulted in widespread poverty among women and men. The high rates of infant and maternal mortality are also issues of great concern.

45. A large number of women in Azerbaijan have achieved a high level of education, and since 1996 the number of women seeking higher education has exceeded that of men. However, more women than men are unemployed, and there are fewer women than men at all levels of decision-making. Women constitute 12 per cent of all deputies in the Parliament and 20 per cent among managers in decision-making positions. Women in the labour market are usually concentrated in the fields of health care, social welfare, education and culture.

46. The Government of Azerbaijan is particularly concerned about the large number of refugees and displaced persons in the country, where women and children constitute the majority. Currently, the Government is implementing a wide set of measures aimed at the integration of refugee and displaced women into social and economic life.

47. The Government of Azerbaijan recognizes that much remains to be done in order to achieve full equality between women and men. In that regard, the Committee is assured of the willingness of the Government to continue to undertake all the necessary measures to implement the obligations of the Convention.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

48. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Azerbaijan for ratifying the Convention without reservations after the proclamation of its independence.

49. The Committee appreciates the submission of the report one year after ratification, and welcomes the supplementary information given to it in an excellent oral presentation by a high-level delegation.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

50. The Committee recognizes that Azerbaijan is facing economic, social and political challenges as a result of its post-war condition, the high number of refugees and the transition to democracy and a market-oriented economy. In that connection, it notes that the State party is undergoing severe economic and social problems, which had a negative impact on the whole population, 85 per cent of which live below the poverty line. Such a situation affects women in particular, who constitute the majority of the population as well as the majority of refugees and displaced persons, and impedes full implementation of the Convention.

Positive aspects

51. The Committee expresses satisfaction at the fact that the Convention has been translated into Azeri and widely disseminated.

52. The Committee takes note of the willingness expressed by the State party's delegation to strengthen the national machinery for the advancement of women and to engage non-governmental organizations in the realization of the goals of the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women.

53. The Committee notes the high number of women involved in the professional and cultural life of the country and the relatively high percentage of women in the decision-making process.

54. The Committee welcomes information on the establishment, with the help of the United Nations Children's Fund, of six regional family-planning centres, which will provide a larger number of women and men with assistance in matters of reproductive health.

55. The Committee also welcomes information on the proposed establishment of a women's bank to provide loans and credits for small enterprises organized by women.

Areas of concern

56. The Committee is concerned by the fact that, although the constitution proclaims that men and women have equal rights and freedoms, there is no definition of discrimination in the constitution or in the laws and no mechanisms to strengthen the prosecution of discriminatory practices against women.

57. The Committee is concerned that the Government of Azerbaijan has not yet put in place its plan for implementation of the Platform for Action.

58. The Committee is concerned that, although Azerbaijan is a secular State in which the provisions of the Convention should be relatively easy to implement, there is, as yet, insufficient governmental commitment to eliminating deeply rooted patriarchal attitudes and avoiding the danger of the insurgence of fundamentalist tendencies, which impedes the full implementation of the Convention, in particular the measures outlined in subparagraph (a) of article 5.

59. The Committee regrets that the role of national machinery has not yet been clearly identified so as to permit a consistent and comprehensive strategy for the full involvement of women in the development process of the country.

60. The Committee notes with concern discrepancies that still exist between *de jure* and de facto equality, particularly in the context of the implementation of articles 10 and 11 of the Convention, and the great number of highly educated women who are living below the poverty line.

61. The Committee is concerned by the fact that although women's rights, as set out in article 11 of the Convention, are guaranteed, there is a growing percentage of unemployment among women and that no measures have been introduced to address that situation.

62. The Committee expresses concern at the fact that paragraph 1 of article 4 of the Convention, which advocates the adoption of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between women and men, has not been used to eliminate the inequality between women and men, particularly in the context of the integration of women into politics and employment and with regard to assistance for displaced and refugee women.

63. The Committee is particularly worried about the high level of maternal, as well as infant, mortality rates and the fact that there are insufficient resources for international emergency aid in that field.

64. The Committee is seriously concerned that insufficient efforts have been introduced to assess and combat violence against women, particularly in the light of the fact that socio-economic and physical hardships usually increase the incidence of violence, particularly in the domestic sphere.

65. The Committee expresses serious concern about the situation of women victims of prostitution and trafficking. The Committee is of the view that the content and the implementation of legislation to address those problems may be discriminatory and might not always respect the rights of victims or produce positive results. For example, the Committee notes that forced medical control of prostitutes, where such measures are not implemented with respect for clients, is discriminatory and might be counterproductive.

66. The Committee is alarmed by the widespread use of abortion as a basic means of family planning. It is also concerned about the general health situation of women, particularly in view of the spread of tuberculosis and other contagious diseases.

67. The Committee expresses concern regarding the situation of women in rural areas, in particular with regard to basic health protection and education, as well as social protection, as outlined in article 14 of the Convention.

68. While understanding the difficult economic situation and the difficulty of reaching durable solutions to the refugee problem, the Committee expresses its concern about the precarious material and psychological conditions of women refugees. It also notes that insufficient attention has been paid to refugee women, including through failure to seek the support of relevant international agencies.

Suggestions and recommendations

69. The Committee recommends that the Government take the steps necessary to ensure respect for, and the effective implementation of, the provisions contained in the Convention. In particular, it recommends that a definition of discrimination closely modelled on article 1 of the Convention be incorporated in the constitution or relevant laws. It also recommends that the provisions of the Convention be reflected in legislation, in particular legislation concerning health, education and labour.

70. The Committee encourages the Government of Azerbaijan, through appropriate legislation, to identify the role of the national machinery for the advancement of women and to provide it with the necessary human and budgetary resources.

71. The Committee encourages the elaboration of a national plan of action for the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted in Beijing and suggests close cooperation with non-governmental organizations working

in the field of human rights and other representatives of civil society to enhance gender awareness and to promote the campaign to combat traditional stereotypes regarding the roles of women and men.

72. The Committee recommends that appropriate institutions consider the utility and necessity of affirmative action, in particular to encourage greater participation of women in decision-making bodies.

73. The Committee further recommends the elaboration of adequate family-planning programmes, with the help of the United Nations Population Fund, so as to avoid the use of abortion as a means of family planning and thereby diminish the risks of maternal mortality resulting from unsafe abortions.

74. The Committee recommends that the Government review the legislation relating to the exploitation and trafficking of women so as to eliminate the discriminatory content of such legislation.

75. The Committee recommends that refugee and migrant women be provided with adequate information to protect them from traffickers and others who seek to exploit women for the purposes of prostitution.

76. The Committee recommends that the Government make efforts, and support those initiated by non-governmental organizations, to assess the extent and prevalence of all forms of violence against women in Azerbaijan and to introduce programmes and measures to combat this problem.

77. The Committee recommends that the provisions of the Convention be widely publicized among the general public and, in particular, among teachers, social workers, law enforcement officials, prison staff, medical personnel, judges, lawyers and members of other professions who are concerned with the implementation of the Convention.

78. The Committee recommends the introduction of human rights education, including the Convention, in schools and universities.

79. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Azerbaijan of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Azerbaijan, and particularly its government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

Croatia

80. The Committee considered the initial report of Croatia (CEDAW/C/CRO/1) at its 363rd, 364th and 368th meetings, on 21 and 23 January 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.363, 364 and 368).

81. The representative of Croatia indicated that her country had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, without reservations, on 8 October 1991. The initial report covers the period up to 1994 and the next report will be a combined second and third report.

82. The representative informed the Committee that, at the time of submission of the initial report, peace is the priority in her country. However, she emphasizes that only through peace and the development of democracy will women be able to achieve advancement in all areas. Croatia has finally achieved a level of peace, stability and security that has enabled it to channel its activities towards social development and the promotion and protection of human rights. The advancement and empowerment of women in all areas of public life are essential for the full implementation of social justice in a democratic society.

83. The Commission for Equality of the Government of the Republic of Croatia was established in May 1996 and has drawn up the national policy for the promotion of equality, based on the Beijing Platform for Action, after consultation with women's non-governmental organizations. The policy was adopted by the Government in December 1997.

84. The national policy provides for specific measures to achieve particular goals in the areas of political decision-making, the economy and the economic position of women, health care, education, human rights of women and violence against women in war and peace.

85. Another representative informed the Committee of the implementation of the Convention in the area of justice. She noted that constitutional rights of Croatian women are protected by the ombudsperson and that both women and men are entitled to all legal remedies available through court proceedings. A new penal law has been introduced and its implementation began on 1 January 1998. She introduced statistics on acts of violence against women, rape in marriage, sexual harassment, prostitution (including international prostitution) and other criminal acts. Trends in such behaviour have instigated changes in the penal code. The representative noted, however, that both men and women may be perpetrators and victims of crime.

86. A number of legislative provisions provide special protection for the family and, in particular, for women in

their role as mothers and caregivers. Special rights are accorded to women and these are not regarded as discriminating against men, whose rights are also recognized. Parenthood is seen as a joint responsibility and this is reflected in legislation and by-laws.

87. Women are not allowed to work in jobs involving hard physical labour or underground or underwater labour, nor in any jobs classified detrimental to the life of women. Night work is prohibited by law unless it is approved under special circumstances and conditions. Employers are prohibited from requesting information on matters unrelated to employment issues, and this is a means of protecting pregnant women from discrimination in the workplace.

88. Minor changes to the law on health care have been introduced since the initial report. Health insurance and causes of hospitalization are described and it is noted that statistics on termination of pregnancy showed that abortions and miscarriages are at the lowest level ever.

89. The national policy on equality, which implements the Platform for Action, was adopted in Beijing in December 1997. The policy was developed to promote equality and is a mandatory document, with Ministries and other authorities being obliged to carry out its provisions. The policy, which was developed in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the Commission for Equality, consists of two parts, a survey of the existing situation and specific measures to address crucial areas.

90. The representative concluded her presentation by examining particular articles of the Convention and their implementation. She indicated that there is a high unemployment rate for women, although there are equal opportunities for women in education and employment.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

91. The Committee congratulates the Government of Croatia for ratifying the Convention without reservations and notes with satisfaction that the country's initial report followed the guidelines and presents comprehensive data on the situation of women in Croatia.

92. The Committee welcomes the excellent oral presentation of the Croatian delegation, which supplements and updates the written report. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Croatia for its high-level delegation, headed by the Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Welfare. This demonstrates the State party's commitment to the Convention and its appreciation of the work of the Committee.

93. The Committee further welcomes the extensive answers provided by the delegation to its questions. This reflects a sincere effort by Croatia to address the concerns raised by the Committee during the presentation of the State party's report.

Positive aspects

94. The Committee commends the Government on the fact that the Convention has been incorporated into the national laws of Croatia and may be invoked before the courts by any citizen.

95. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the Commission for Equality in Croatia. It also welcomes the national policy for the promotion of equality, which has been adopted to implement the Beijing Platform for Action. The Committee is pleased to be provided with copies of the national policy.

96. The Committee commends the efforts made by the Government of Croatia to cooperate with civil society and non-governmental organizations and its promise of further efforts to improve cooperation with non-governmental organizations in the future, particularly in view of the presence of highly competent and active women's non-governmental organizations in Croatia. The Committee welcomes the fact that the national policy envisaged cooperation with such organizations.

97. The Committee notes with satisfaction the delegation's oral responses, reflecting willingness to give further consideration to areas and concerns raises by the Committee. In this context, the Committee is very pleased to hear the Government's oral commitment to examine the following issues in the light of the Committee's suggestions:

(a) The need for measures to eliminate stereotypes that restrict women's role to that of mothers and caregivers;

(b) The need for measures to improve the participation of women in political life;

(c) The appointment of a deputy ombudsperson to deal specifically with women's rights;

(d) The need to improve public awareness about the Convention so that it may be used more frequently throughout the judicial system;

(e) The possibility of instituting a system of restraining orders, in particular to protect women subjected to domestic violence;

(f) The need to commence a dialogue and to coordinate efforts with trade unions on measures to protect women in the area of employment, in particular with respect to illegal pressuring of women by employers in relation to pregnancy within a certain period after the commencement of employment;

(g) The need for increased assistance to family members, in particular women, taking care of the elderly;

(h) The need to collect more detailed information on the situation of rural women.

98. The Committee notes with great satisfaction the existence of programmes to assist women with special needs.

99. The Committee is pleased to be informed of the measures implemented to eradicate gender stereotypes within the education system. It is also pleased with the introduction of measures to introduce human rights education into schools.

100. The Committee is generally impressed by the health-care system in Croatia and by the Government's clear commitment to universal coverage.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

101. The Committee notes that Croatia faced significant economic and social difficulties as a consequence of the country's recent involvement in armed conflict. Repercussions include the presence of large numbers of refugees and displaced persons. The Committee also notes difficulties resulting from the transition to a market economy and a democratic political structure. The Committee observed that in the absence of gender-sensitive policies and measures to counteract negative effects, these changes may have a negative effect on women's enjoyment of their human rights and impede the implementation of the Convention.

Principal subjects of concern

102. Despite some clarification during oral responses by the delegation, the Committee remains very concerned about the view expressed in the State party's report that women themselves bear full responsibility for their low level of participation in public life. This suggests that the Government lacked understanding of indirect and structural discrimination and its impact on women.

103. The Committee is particularly concerned about the consistent emphasis placed on women's roles as mothers and caregivers in Croatian legislation pertaining to a variety of areas. While legislative provisions protecting maternity are important, the Committee is concerned that prioritizing that aspect of women's lives reinforces traditional and stereotypical role expectations, which tend to limit women's full participation in society. The Committee comments that despite the fact that women in Croatia are well-educated and participate in the labour force in large numbers, a careful and gender-sensitive analysis of the emphasis on motherhood vis-à-vis women's roles in the public sphere is needed on the part of the Government to assure de facto gender equality in the Croatian society of the future.

104. The Committee expresses concern that data has not been collected in some areas. In particular, the Committee is concerned that minimal attention has been paid to the issue of women living in poverty and that no sex-disaggregated data are available on that topic. It is also concerned that no sex-disaggregated data have been collected on human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and that no reliable data had been collected on teenage pregnancy.

105. The Committee expresses concern that in view of the complex ethnic and religious composition of the population of Croatia, the report does not include statistical information on the social, economic and political standing of minority women.

106. The Committee is disturbed to note the Government's view that there is no need to specify gender inequality every time the issue of equality is raised. The Committee is of the opinion that this might contribute to the concealment and perpetuation of, in particular, de facto inequality. It points out that, in order to increase the visibility of gender issues and to promote a gender-sensitive national agenda, it is crucial to incorporate gender in all discussions of equality.

107. While the Committee is reassured to be informed that acts of domestic violence are prosecuted by public attorneys at the request of the victims, it expresses concern with regard to the adequacy of measures to encourage women to come forward with complaints and about the fact that prosecution by public attorneys ex officio or upon the complaint of third parties is not incorporated in legislation on domestic violence.

108. The Committee expresses concern that there is evidence that church-related organizations adversely influence the Government's policies concerning women and thereby impede full implementation of the Convention.

109. In the area of health, the Committee is particularly concerned that services pertaining to women's reproductive health are the first to be affected as a result of the Government's financial constraints. It is also concerned about information regarding the refusal, by some hospitals, to provide abortions on the basis of conscientious objection

of doctors. The Committee considers this to be an infringement of women's reproductive rights.

Suggestions and recommendations

110. The Committee recommends that the Government of Croatia continue to implement and strengthen the measures it is taking to empower women and to mainstream gender issues. It encourages specific affirmative actions targeted to numerical goals and quotas, in particular in those areas such as political and decision-making positions in public life where women's de facto equality has not been improving at the desired pace.

111. The Committee urges the Government of Croatia to adhere to its oral statement of intention to give further consideration to the issues outlined in paragraph 97 above with a view to undertaking measures in response to the concerns of the Committee.

112. The Committee urges the Government of Croatia to take further measures to promote recognition of the variety of roles that women play in society. To that end, it suggests that it is crucial to educate the Croatian public with regard to the importance of an equitable distribution between women and men of family roles and "caring responsibilities".

113. The Committee recommends that the Government take advantage of existing bodies of knowledge relating to indirect and structural patterns of discrimination. It emphasizes that the Government, rather than women themselves, have primary responsibility for implementing strategies to eliminate these forms of discrimination.

114. The Committee requests that the Government of Croatia include more detailed information on the implementation of the provisions of article 6 of the Convention in future reports. The Committee requests that additional data be collected on the status of women involved in prostitution. The Committee would also appreciate more detailed information on the problem of trafficking in women, in particular migrant women, and the measures taken to implement legislation in this area.

115. The Committee recommends that the Government of Croatia collect and make available statistical information pertaining to the social, economic and political status of minority women with a view to developing specific policies to respond to the needs of different groups.

116. The Committee requests that more information be provided about the situation of women with disabilities in future reports.

117. The Committee strongly recommends that the Government take steps to secure the enjoyment by women of their reproductive rights by, *inter alia*, guaranteeing them access to abortion services in public hospitals. It is suggested that the Government examine fully the implications for women, in particular, of funding cuts for contraceptives and that it implement strategies to address any detrimental impact on women.

118. The Committee urges the Government of Croatia to take the necessary steps to incorporate the participation of non-governmental organizations in the preparation of the country's next report to the Committee.

119. The Committee requests wide dissemination in Croatia of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Croatia, and particularly government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

Zimbabwe

120. The Committee considered the initial report of Zimbabwe (CEDAW/C/ZWE/1) at its 366th, 367th and 372nd meetings on 22 and 27 January 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.366, 367 and 372).

121. The representative of Zimbabwe expressed her Government's commitment to the full implementation of the Convention and the achievement of gender equality. Much progress has been made in that area, including the establishment of the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women and the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights. A national programme of action and vision 2020 has also been formulated, relevant legal provisions enacted and gender focal points appointed in all Ministries. Despite this, prevailing negative attitudes towards women and discriminatory customary laws and practices continue to contribute to the slow pace in advancing the status of women.

122. Non-governmental organizations and research organizations specializing in gender and development issues had been consulted during the preparation of the report and were also active in promoting gender equality.

123. The representative noted that the constitution had been amended in 1997 and now explicitly prohibits discrimination

based on gender and that other legal instruments, including the Sex Discrimination Removal Act, also prohibit discrimination based on sex.

124. The Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs was established as the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women in 1981. Although the Ministry has since been dissolved, the National Machinery continues and gender focal points have been appointed in all Ministries.

125. The representative notes that an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights, which advises Government on human rights issues, has been established, and violations of human rights, including those relating to gender, can be investigated by the ombudsperson.

126. Court procedures to improve the experience of victims, including provisions to allow for the taking of evidence in a separate room, have been introduced. Violence against women remains a serious problem and gender-sensitivity training has been introduced for police and judicial officers.

127. Affirmative action measures, in particular in the areas of education, employment and political participation and decision-making, have been introduced, but sex role stereotypes continue to affect the attitudes of many Zimbabweans. In that regard, the Government has begun a programme to review school textbooks and is developing a curriculum on human rights to be taught at the primary and secondary levels.

128. The representative indicated that HIV/AIDS is a serious problem in Zimbabwe and that the pandemic has increased the burden on women. Rural women generally remain very disadvantaged compared with their urban counterparts.

129. The representative concluded by noting that the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women has drawn up a list of statutes that do not comply with the Convention. In addition, the Convention has been translated into two major local languages and disseminated widely in simplified form.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

130. The Committee congratulates the Government for ratifying the Convention without reservations. It welcomes the State party's initial report, which is comprehensive and frank in its analysis of obstacles to the implementation of the Convention. The Committee is also pleased to note that the report has been prepared in consultation with non-governmental organizations. Additional information provided by the oral presentation is also appreciated. The Committee welcomes the high-level delegation, which included the Minister of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperatives.

Positive aspects

131. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government for its strong commitment to advancing the status of women and commends it for establishing the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women after independence, as well as for assigning a gender focal point in each Ministry.

132. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the constitution has been amended to prohibit any act of discrimination on the basis of sex.

133. The Committee commends the Government for translating the Convention into local languages in order to encourage its wider dissemination.

134. The Committee commends the Government of Zimbabwe for undertaking a number of initiatives, including the development of a National Gender Policy, to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

135. The Committee notes with satisfaction the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights and the strengthening of the office of the ombudsperson, which can now investigate the police and security forces. These developments enhance the recognition of human rights and the enjoyment of these rights by women.

136. The Committee commends the Government for putting in place clear and relevant national policies for women, which are consistent with international agreements, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

137. The Committee welcomes the introduction of gender-sensitive training for police officers and the establishment of "victim-friendly courts".

138. The Committee also commends the implementation of affirmative action measures with respect to education, employment and political participation, in particular in the rural councils.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

139. The Committee notes with great concern that, although the national laws guaranteed the equal status of women, the

continued existence of and adherence to customary laws perpetuated discrimination against women, particularly in the context of the family. The Committee notes with dissatisfaction that prevailing traditional and socio-cultural attitudes towards women contribute to the perpetuation of negative images of women, which impedes their emancipation.

140. The Committee notes with concern the negative impact of the structural adjustment programmes, especially in the areas of education, health and employment.

Principal areas of concern

141. The Committee expresses concern that discriminatory traditional practices, such as *lobola*, polygamy and female genital mutilation, are still accepted. Although the constitution criminalizes any act of discrimination on the ground of sex and, furthermore, the practice of *lobola* has been made illegal, tradition and customary law still ensure continued discrimination.

142. The Committee notes with concern that much of the violence against women, especially in society and in the domestic sphere, is not recognized by law. Violence against women is a serious violation of women's human rights. In addition, there is not enough support provided by the Government to help victims of violence, such as rehabilitation programmes and temporary shelters.

143. The Committee expresses concern that the Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperation, as the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women, has no real power or responsibility to initiate and implement policy measures to eliminate discrimination against women.

144. While the Committee agrees with the effectiveness of having gender focal points in all Ministries, the Committee is concerned about the absence of a functional central coordinating body with a regular budget.

145. The Committee is concerned at the low level of women's participation at the decision-making level.

146. The Committee notes with dissatisfaction that prostitutes are criminalized by law while their clients go unpunished. The Committee notes with concern that poor women, migrant women and women from other marginalized sectors are particularly vulnerable and often turn to prostitution as a means of survival. The Committee notes with concern the absence of data and programmes for women in prostitution, suggesting that the Government has not adequately addressed article 6 of the Convention.

147. The Committee is deeply concerned about the effect of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the very high rate of infection among young women, who comprise 84 per cent of those infected in the 15 to 19 year age group and 55 per cent of the 20 to 29 year age group. The Committee notes that this is of particular concern given the risks of transmission to infants through childbirth and breastfeeding.

148. The Committee is also concerned about reports relating to the refusal of some health-care providers to give family planning services to sexually active adolescents, despite there being no legal restrictions in this regard.

149. The Committee expresses concern that women in rural areas often suffer more as a result of prevailing negative attitudes and discriminatory traditional practices. Furthermore, women in rural areas often work longer hours than any other group.

150. The Committee is concerned at the lack of support systems to enable pregnant teenagers to continue their schooling. The Committee also notes with dissatisfaction that there are no detailed statistics available on teenage pregnancy.

Suggestions and recommendations

151. The Committee urges the Government to take a more proactive role by introducing concrete measures to abolish all discriminatory customs and practices.

152. The Committee urges the Government to review the functions of the National Machinery with a view to providing it with the authority and financial resources to initiate and implement policy programmes to eliminate discrimination against women. The National Machinery should also act as a coordinating body for all the gender focal points of the ministries. A public awareness-raising campaign for gender equality should be organized by the National Machinery targeting both women and men. A campaign to promote positive images of women should also be organized, involving the mass media.

153. The Committee suggests that gender-sensitive training should be extended to all sectors, including health-care workers.

154. The Committee further recommends that the President and Government Ministers be briefed regularly on the progress in implementation of the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action. It recommends that measures be taken to ensure that the President and the Ministers are accountable for gender-mainstreaming within their respective departments.

155. The Committee recommends the adoption of temporary special measures of affirmative action to promote the status of women in all spheres of society.

156. The Committee suggests that the Government extend the function of the office of the ombudsperson to allow it to address complaints about gender discrimination in the private sphere and the private sector.

157. The Committee recommends the codification of family and customary laws, incorporating only those customary laws and practices that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

158. The strongly recommends that the Government adequately address article 6 of the Convention by putting in place socio-economic programmes that will assist women living by prostitution. The Committee urges the Government to document systematically the prevalence of prostitution so as to enable it to develop assistance programmes in this regard.

159. Noting that illegal abortion is cited by the Government as a major cause of death for women in Zimbabwe, the Committee recommends that the Government reappraise the law on abortion with a view to its liberalization and decriminalization.

160. The Committee urges the Government to increase its efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic and to ensure that appropriate sexual and reproductive health information, education and services are provided to all women and, in particular, to adolescents.

161. The Committee suggests that the Government provide sex education and practical family planning to both youth and adults.

162. The Committee requested more detailed data and adequate information on all forms of violence against women, prostitution, and trafficking in women in the next report.

163. The Committee requests detailed data and adequate information on teenage pregnancy and the ability of young mothers to continue their education in the next report.

164. The Committee encourages the Government of Zimbabwe to continue its efforts to implement the Beijing Platform for Action. It also recommends the establishment of a functional central coordinating body with a regular budget to accelerate implementation of Government gender policies and programmes.

165. The Committee requests the Government to utilize the Committee's general recommendations in order to plan measures to advance the status of women and to implement the measures more effectively.

166. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Zimbabwe of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Zimbabwe, and particularly its government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

Czech Republic

167. The Committee considered the initial report of the Czech Republic (CEDAW/C/CZE/1) at its 370th and 371st meetings, on 26 January 1998, and at its 373rd meeting on 27 January 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.370, 371 and 373).

168. In introducing the report, the representative of the Czech Republic indicated that more than two years had elapsed since her country's initial report had been submitted and, consequently, her statement would focus on important changes in protecting women's rights as individuals.

169. The representative referred to the ratification of a number of International Labour Organization (ILO) instruments, including ILO Conventions 89, 100 and 101. She also cited several legislative reform measures that had been taken, including amendments to the Employment Act (1/1991); Act on Wages (1/1992); Act on Salaries (143/1992); and Act on Pension Insurance (155/1995). The representative then briefed the Committee on the differential entitlements in retirement pensions between women and men, and among women based upon the number of children.

170. Although no fundamental changes in health or social insurance had occurred since 1994, certain health insurance benefits had been transferred to the State social allowance system in 1995, with the goal of unifying State social allowances and benefits and thus providing support under a single system to families with children.

171. Recent changes had led to the development of civil society, including women's organizations, resulting in activities, conferences and workshops that addressed specific women's issues, such as domestic violence, violence against women in general and women victims of criminal acts.

172. The representative then briefed the Committee on specific programmes for women related to education and vocational training and described some of the socio-

economic factors that significantly influence women's position in society and in the labour market. She also noted the importance of kindergartens and their linkage with the rate of female employment.

173. The representative indicated that Decree No. 261/97 specified explicitly the jobs and workplaces which are prohibited for all women, pregnant women, mothers until the end of the nine months after childbirth and youth, respectively. She also referred to draft legislation that specified conditions for occupational health and safety.

174. The representative cited a number of women's health programmes and projects, including those related to HIV/AIDS, which focused primarily on the reproductive health of women.

175. The representative stated that prostitution, although not considered a criminal offence, was a growing problem, which was primarily attributed to illegal migration. She also expressed concern that organized prostitution continues to be a lucrative source of money for criminal gangs. A number of measures have been adopted by the Czech Republic to fight prostitution, including the creation of a special unit for detecting organized crime.

176. The representative referred to the foundations of the Czech legal system, which protect women's rights, focusing on individual citizens, based upon the principle of uniform, general and equal protection of both men and women.

177. In concluding her presentation, the representative of the Czech Republic indicated that she looked forward to the Committee's questions so that she could provide a complete and objective picture of women in the Czech Republic.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

178. The Committee compliments the Government of the Czech Republic for exhibiting a clear commitment to the promotion of the human rights of its citizens since the independence of the country and for ratifying the Convention without reservations. It is also pleased to note the positive spirit in which its comments and suggestions has been received by the delegation of the Czech Republic.

179. The additional and updated information presented in the oral report of the representative of the Czech Republic is welcomed by the Committee, as an aid to its understanding of the conditions of women and the extent of the implementation of the Convention in the Czech Republic.

Positive aspects

180. The Committee is particularly satisfied at the information included in the oral report of the delegation about the very creation of an inter-ministerial coordinating body within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Similarly, the reported effort to draft a National Plan on the basis of the Beijing Platform for Action by a commission on the status of women is especially welcomed by the Committee.

181. The Committee notes that there have been significant gains in the status of women in the Czech Republic, particularly with regard to education and participation in economic life, as well as social support services, such as child care.

182. The Committee is also happy to note the high standards of health coverage in general, and for maternal health in particular, that exist throughout the Czech Republic. In this context, it is especially gratified to note the exceptionally low infant and perinatal mortality rates attained by the Czech Republic.

183. The Committee is pleased to note that the legal system of the Czech Republic gives supremacy to international treaties over domestic legislation and that numerous equality provisions can be found in the Constitution, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms and in several other codes.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

184. The Committee observes that the report of the Czech Republic and its oral introduction to the Committee reflect an overarching tendency on the part of the Government to conceive of women as mothers and within the context of the family, rather than as individuals and independent actors in the public sphere. The Committee considers that such a perception is a major obstacle to the implementation of the Convention because it reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of such critical concepts as gender roles, indirect discrimination and de facto inequality.

185. The Committee is distressed to note that, while the Government is eager to improve the living conditions of women in the Czech Republic, the structural and cultural causes of gender inequality are not fully appreciated by the Government. Having emerged from the restrictions of a totalitarian State, where full employment of women and institutional caretaking of children has been emphasized, the Czech Republic's current policies directed at women and family overemphasize motherhood and family roles for women. The Committee considers the absence of special

measures to elevate women's status, save those pertaining to the protection of pregnancy and motherhood, to be a major constraint to the full implementation of the Convention.

Principal subjects of concern

186. The Committee notes with concern that Czech law does not provide a clear definition of discrimination and/or address de facto inequalities between women and men.

187. Though the creation of an intra-ministerial coordinating unit on women's issues within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is welcomed, the Committee considers that such a body cannot be viewed as a sufficient national machinery. The Committee views the absence of a national machinery with adequate resources and personnel as a severe constraint to the implementation of the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action.

188. The Committee is very concerned about women's inadequate and declining representation in decision-making positions in the political and economic spheres and at the Government's apparent lack of attention to this phenomenon. This is reflected in the absence of any special temporary measures to remedy the situation, as well as the lack of Government willingness to consider any such measures.

189. The decline in the number of women's non-governmental organizations since the early days of the Czech Republic's establishment is also noted with concern by the Committee. The Committee considers the existence of an active civil society, in which a wide range of views and attitudes on gender equality find expression, to be highly beneficial for the promotion of equality between women and men. It also encourages Government cooperation with non-governmental organizations representing different women's interests and perspectives in the implementation and monitoring of the provisions of the Convention.

190. The Committee notes with particular concern the absence of special legislation on violence against women and is alarmed by the Government's perception that there is no need for such legislation. The Committee considers the absence of data on the extent and prevalence of such violence in the Czech Republic to be a critical deficiency. It also expresses concern about the lack of information on any preventive measures and/or programmes to support victims of violence, raise public awareness of the issue and sensitize health professionals and law-enforcement personnel on the topic.

191. The Committee notes with concern the lack of measures and programmes to promote a positive image of women as actors in all areas at all levels of public life and to encourage equal sharing of family responsibilities by men in the media.

192. The Committee notes with concern that, in the Czech Republic, prostitution and trafficking in women are approached exclusively in the context of combating organized crime. These crimes are closely related to economic transition and socio-political changes. The Committee acknowledges the adverse effects of such developments as rising unemployment and increasing poverty as factors contributing to prostitution and trafficking in women.

193. The Committee views the Czech Republic's policy of creating "household management" schools, which, although not formally sex segregated, basically cater to female students and train them for traditional stereotypical roles, as promoting gender stereotyping. The same applies with regard to the practice of some schools admitting only boys because of their "different physical abilities". In stressing the importance of encouraging girls and boys to choose non-traditional fields of study in order to eliminate discrimination against women, the Committee expresses its heightened concern about such schools.

194. The Committee notes with concern that the Government appeared reluctant to direct girls to scientific and technological fields of study.

195. The Committee is very concerned about the prevailing wage disparities between women and men and the segregation of women in low-paying and low skilled work, which had been one of the results of privatization and economic rationalization.

196. The Committee also notes with concern the increase in over-protective measures for pregnancy and motherhood, as well as early retirement policies for women. It also noted that the cultural glorification of women's family roles could exacerbate the negative impact of economic rationalization policies on women.

197. The Committee is very disturbed about the high rate of induced abortions in the Czech Republic, particularly in the face of the wide availability of contraceptives. It is further dissatisfied to learn about the lack of information and training of health professionals with regard to contraceptives. Owing to the partial nature of the information provided in the oral report, the Committee is not entirely satisfied with the information provided on women's general health in the Czech Republic.

198. The Committee is especially disappointed not to have received answers to its questions on the implementation of the provisions of articles 7, 8 and 16 of the Convention in

the Czech Republic's oral responses. In particular, the very high divorce rate that prevails in the country, its causes, as well as the legal status of protection, if any, accorded to women in de facto unions are of special concern to the Committee.

Suggestions and recommendations

199. The Committee recommends that a definition of discrimination modelled on article 1 of the Convention be incorporated in the constitution and other relevant laws.

200. The Committee recommends that the Government of the Czech Republic give impetus to the establishment of an adequately resourced national machinery with a clear mandate to implement, coordinate and monitor the provisions of the Convention. It further recommends that, as a future member of the European Union, the Czech Republic draw upon the experiences of the European Union countries, make efforts to get assistance from such countries as it designs machinery, and review its legislation and policies in the area of discrimination against women.

201. The Committee urges the Government of the Czech Republic to review its perspective on special temporary measures in the area of women's political and economic participation in leadership positions. In this context, it recommends instituting numerical goals and targets, as well as a plan of action with timetables to boost women's participation in these areas.

202. The Committee also urges the enactment of a special law and introduction of policies to combat all forms of violence against women, together with promotion of education and media programmes sensitizing the public on this issue. In addition, it recommends introduction of training for the judiciary, law enforcement officers, lawyers, health professionals and others whose work is relevant in the context of violence against women. The Committee strongly recommends that the Czech Republic initiate comprehensive research to assess the extent and nature of violence against women in the country.

203. The Committee recommends a comprehensive study and analysis of the effects of the economic and socio-political transition of the country on women. It is necessary to carry out such a study from a gender perspective to determine the differential impact of the transition on women and men and to determine the differential policies that are required.

204. The Committee strongly recommends the formulation and implementation of effective policies to combat prostitution and trafficking of women. The Committee suggests that measures to combat these crimes require not only services to victims and sanctions for perpetrators, but the design and implementation of comprehensive national social and economic policies to create new opportunities for women. It therefore recommends that the Government take effective action to combat feminization of poverty and to improve the economic situation of women in order to prevent trafficking and prostitution.

205. The Committee urges the Government to launch specific training programmes to educate health professionals, as well as mass campaigns to inform the public on the use of contraceptives and misuse of induced abortions as a means of family planning.

206. The Committee strongly stresses the need to promote the image of women as individuals and independent actors in the public sphere and recommends that the Government launch comprehensive, systematic, goal-oriented efforts to balance the existing positive emphasis placed on women's role in the private sphere in laws, policy measures and governmental attitudes, with an equal emphasis on their public sphere functions. In this regard, the Committee also recommends that the Government encourage men, through public media campaigns, school curricula and special temporary measures, such as effective use of paternity leave, to share family responsibilities equally with women.

207. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in the Czech Republic of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of the Czech Republic, and particularly government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

2. Combined second and third periodic reports

Bulgaria

208. The Committee considered the combined second and third periodic reports of Bulgaria (CEDAW/C/BGR/2-3) at its 373rd and 374th meetings, on 28 January 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.373 and 374).

209. The combined reports covered the period up to 3 November 1994 and were supplemented by a document

containing additional information to update the information contained in the written reports and the core document providing information about political, legal and social structures in Bulgaria.

210. In her statement, the representative drew attention to the fact that, since Bulgaria's initial report in 1985, the country had commenced a process of radical political and economic transformation. A new constitution had been adopted in 1991. The representative pointed to a number of difficulties the country had faced during the transition period, including the fact that there had been seven different Governments in power since 1990. Economic conditions had also been severe. However, the Committee was informed that a more favourable economic position was emerging as evidenced by improved foreign investment and a forecast of modest growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in the first half of 1998.

211. The representative acknowledged that Bulgarian society had been inherited from the communist era where there was *de jure*, but not de facto equality for women. She expressed the Government's commitment to taking further measures to improve the de facto situation of women in line with the Convention. She referred to the fact that, in May 1992, Bulgaria withdrew its reservation on paragraph 1 of article 29 of the Convention concerning the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. She also outlined steps taken by the Government of Bulgaria to translate and disseminate the Convention widely throughout the country. The representative stated the Government's position that equality between women and men was a *conditio sine qua non* of democracy.

212. The representative pointed out that article 6 of the constitution of Bulgaria guaranteed equality and non-discrimination. In addition, the Committee was informed that, although there are no special laws on human rights and gender equality, article 5 of the constitution provided for the incorporation of international treaties to which the Republic of Bulgaria was a party into domestic law.

213. The representative cited statistics demonstrating that infant mortality in Bulgaria had decreased substantially since the years from 1970 to 1980. She referred to the substantial increase in the number of births outside of wedlock in Bulgaria and reported that the Government saw this as a reflection of more flexible choices of family partnerships for women than previously.

214. The representative outlined some measures that had been adopted to improve the situation of Roma children, in particular with regard to education. Several reports had been prepared relating to the Roma minority and various consultations carried out with the specialized agencies on the issue. The situation of the Roma minority had been raised during the consideration of Bulgaria's proposed membership of the European Union and further measures would be implemented in cooperation with the Union.

215. The Committee was informed of the measures taken by the Government of Bulgaria to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. Immediately after the Fourth World Conference on Women, an intergovernmental commission had been established. In cooperation with women's non-governmental organizations, the commission produced a national action plan. This was adopted by the Council of Ministers in July 1996 and a decision was reached to establish a permanent intergovernmental council to monitor its application. At present, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs served as the focal point for the commission.

216. The representative referred to the Government's proposal to appoint an ombudsperson who could be entrusted with the role of monitoring women's human rights and gender equality. A draft law was in the process of preparation and two seminars to discuss the proposal had been planned for 1998.

217. The representative reported that some very favourable advances had been made regarding the participation of women in decision-making and political life. In some Ministries, the number of women significantly exceeded the number of men. The situation was similar in the judiciary.

218. The representative referred to the problem of unemployment for women and noted that cases of discrimination against women were still evident, with some employers preferring to fill vacancies with men or with very young women who had no family responsibilities. It was acknowledged that women were more affected by unemployment than men.

219. The representative stated that the reduction of crime had been, and continued to be, a main priority for the Government. In particular, she referred to measures taken to strengthen provisions against the illicit trafficking in persons and emphasized the Government's commitment to strengthen international and regional cooperation on the issue.

220. The Committee was informed that, while domestic violence resulting in severe, medium and slight physical injury was regarded as a criminal offence, proceedings could only be commenced upon the complaint of the victim. The representative acknowledged that domestic violence in Bulgaria was still not seen as a human rights abuse and that more awareness-raising campaigns were needed. The

Parliament was at present considering draft legislation that would criminalize domestic violence against children, including girls.

221. The representative concluded by indicating that the Government was committed to the implementation of the Convention and looked forward to the Committee's recommendations in that regard.

Concluding comments of the Committee

222. The Committee notes with appreciation the combined second and third periodic reports of Bulgaria. The Committee is pleased that an effort has been made to update the information and to respond to the questions posed by the pre-session working group.

223. The Committee welcomes the high-level delegation headed by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.

224. The Committee appreciates the efforts made to respond to the questions posed by the experts during the oral presentation. The delegation is able to provide some valuable information within a very short time, which significantly assists the Committee's understanding of the situation faced by women in Bulgaria. However, the Committee notes that the delegation has failed to address many of the questions transmitted to the Government of Bulgaria by the pre-session working group and that some of those posed are not addressed in depth. In addition, many of the questions that have been raised by members of the Committee during the delegation's oral presentation have not been responded to. The Committee appreciates the time constraints imposed, but nonetheless requests that all those questions be answered in the next report.

Positive aspects

225. The Committee commends Bulgaria for withdrawing its reservation to article 29 of the Convention.

226. The Committee notes that the Bulgarian constitution enshrines formal equality between women and men.

227. The Committee notes the willingness of the Bulgarian Government, expressed in frequent oral statements, to improve, in accordance with the Convention, the de facto and *de jure* situation of women in Bulgaria, who currently carry a disproportionate share of the burden associated with the radical political and economic changes in the country.

228. The Committee notes with great pleasure the changes implemented in Bulgaria in recent years that have brought about respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. In particular, the Committee welcomes the Government's recognition that democracy will not be achieved without the full and equal participation of women in decision-making and all other areas of life.

229. The Committee welcomes the Government's proposed establishment of ombudsperson for human rights who will also monitor women's rights and equality issues. The Committee notes with satisfaction the delegate's comments recognizing the importance of ensuring that the ombudsperson has adequate resources and is given a clear mandate to address gender issues.

230. The Committee commends Bulgaria on the adoption of a national action plan to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. The Committee is also pleased that efforts have been made to establish a body to monitor the implementation of the plan, namely the intergovernmental commission. The comments of the delegate that an appropriate place will soon be found for the commission during the ongoing process of administrative reform are noted and the Committee looks forward to the provision of further information on that point in the State party's next report.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

231. The Committee notes the difficult economic and political process Bulgaria is undergoing in its transformation to democracy and a market-oriented society.

232. The Committee considers that previous ideological positions, including the former insistence on formal or *de jure* equality, now tends to impede a proper understanding of the complex issue of discrimination, such as structural and indirect discrimination, which further compounds the situation of the de facto inequality of women.

233. The Committee considers that the persistence of the emphasis on women's role as mothers, together with the extensive protection provided to women as mothers, tend to perpetuate sex role stereotypes and reduce the father's role and responsibility in the upbringing of the children. This makes it difficult for the Government to promote new concepts of men's and women's roles without appearing to interfere, once again, with individual choices and desires.

Principal subjects of concern

234. The Committee notes with concern that the Government of Bulgaria apparently lacks an understanding of paragraph 1 of article 4 of the Convention. As embodied in the Convention, special, temporary measures or affirmative action means the establishment of programmes

that advantage women more than men. They require undermining formal equality for a certain period of time in order to achieve de facto equality in the long term. The reference by the representative of the Government of Bulgaria to earlier retirement age for women than men is not regarded as a measure of affirmative action.

235. While welcoming the establishment of a commission to monitor the implementation of the national action plan, the Committee notes the prevalence of women in the Department of Foreign Affairs and agrees that it is commendable to seek the involvement of women in the Commission. However, the Committee feels that a failure to house the commission within an appropriate framework in the governmental structure may impair the implementation of the Convention.

236. While the Committee notes the fact that the Bulgarian constitution contains the principle of equality between women and men, it is concerned that the constitution does not contain a definition of discrimination modelled on article 1 of the Convention.

237. The Committee is concerned that the Government of Bulgaria has not taken any steps to translate the provisions of the Convention into national legislation.

238. The Committee is concerned that there are no special laws aimed at bringing about women's de facto as well as *de jure* equality and that the Government has not demonstrated a commitment to introduce special, temporary measures in the near future.

239. The Committee notes that the reports do not reflect any government strategy regarding a national machinery to address women's issues and to implement the Convention. It is concerned that valuable time has been lost in establishing such a machinery and integrating a gender dimension into all policies, which the Committee deems especially important during times of radical societal and economic change. Information provided in the oral presentation about the establishment of an intergovernmental commission to coordinate the national action plan on women's issues provides some clarification, although the goals of the national action plan, its timetable and the resources committed to its implementation remain unclear. The Committee remains concerned that currently there appears to be no strong national machinery.

240. The Committee is particularly alarmed by the overwhelming number of people living below the poverty line in Bulgaria, which the delegation states to be approximately 80 per cent. This is of concern, as women, and in particular elderly women, are most likely to be adversely affected by poverty.

241. The Committee is very concerned that large numbers of highly educated women in Bulgaria are excluded from decision-making processes and hence their skills are not fully harnessed for the development of the country.

242. The Committee identifies the problem of violence against women in Bulgaria, both in the public and private spheres, as one of its dominant concerns. Some information has been provided in response to the questions of the pre-session working group, but the Committee questions whether the Government's responsibility (flowing from the ratification of the Convention and in accordance with the Committee's General Recommendation 19) for taking measures to address the problem at all levels are fully acknowledged. The Committee expresses concern at the fact that legal proceedings for domestic violence may only be initiated upon the complaint of the victim.

243. Although some information is provided about measures to combat trafficking in women, the Committee remains concerned about the adequacy of the response so far. The Committee is concerned about the extent of the problem, regarding both Bulgarian women who are led into prostitution in other European countries by organized crime, as well as women from other countries who have fallen into prostitution in Bulgaria. The Committee notes the Government's undertaking to give priority to international cooperation on this issue and looks forward to information about the progress achieved in the State party's next report.

244. The Committee is very concerned about the unemployment rate for women in Bulgaria. It is also concerned about the fact that the Government provides contradictory information on whether women's unemployment is higher than that of men. It is clear, however, that, despite their high level of education, unemployment amongst Bulgarian women warrants the serious attention and efforts of the Bulgarian Government.

245. Although the delegation describes some measures that have been taken to improve the situation of Roma children, the Committee is concerned about the very high rate of non-participation of those children in schools. The need to provide incentives for children to stay in school and to educate their parents as to the importance of continued schooling is emphasized.

246. The reports describe an extremely high rate of induced abortion among women, in particular young women, in Bulgaria. The Committee expresses alarm that abortion appears to be used as a method of family planning. Although the delegation provides some additional information in its oral presentation, the Committee remains concerned about the measures taken to ensure that women have proper access

to contraceptives. The Committee is also confused about the causes of the rising rate of out-of-wedlock births and requests further information on that point. The Committee is also concerned that the Government does not have data, disaggregated by sex, on drug dependency and venereal disease, including HIV/AIDS.

247. The Committee believes it has been provided with inadequate information on the situation of rural women and the extent to which they have benefited from agrarian and other types of reform in the rural sector.

248. The Committee expresses concern that information has not been provided on the social, economic and political status of women of different ethnic and religious minorities in Bulgaria.

249. The Committee requests the Government of Bulgaria to address in its next report all the questions raised by members of the pre-session working group, as well as all the questions raised by members of the Committee during the oral presentation which have not been answered. In addition, the Committee requests that particular attention should be paid to and detailed descriptions provided of measures to change the prevailing attitudes and policies with regard to women's role in the home, to remove stereotypes from school books and from other facets of the education system, so as to overcome the legal, economic and social problems of female heads of households with children, to combat all forms of discrimination against women in employment and to improve women's access to free legal aid and the standard of living of rural women.

250. The Committee urges the Government to introduce a definition of discrimination modelled on article 1 of the Convention into its constitution and other relevant laws.

251. The Committee recommends that, despite the economic difficulties associated with transition, the Government give priority to the establishment of a strong and effective national machinery with adequate financial and human resources for advancing the position of women in Bulgaria. Special attention should be given to where this machinery should be placed within the Government structure to make it as effective as possible. The Committee notes that countries undergoing transition have a unique political opportunity to improve the situation of women as an integral part of the successful transition to democracy and a free market economy. They can thereby avoid the entrenchment of structural discrimination and the need for further fundamental changes in the future.

252. The Committee recommends that, as the Government embarks upon the procedure of setting up an appropriate national machinery for the promotion of women's rights, recourse be had to the experience of other European Governments that have been through the same procedure in the past. The Committee requests that more information be provided on the implementation of the national action plan in the State party's next report.

253. The Committee urges the Government of Bulgaria to appoint an ombudsperson, in accordance with the current proposal before Parliament. The Committee further urges the Government to ensure that sufficient resources be allocated to enable the office to function effectively. The ombudsperson should also be provided with a clear mandate to address gender issues.

254. The Committee strongly recommends that temporary, special measures, in accordance with paragraph 1 of article 4 of the Convention, be adopted in all necessary areas, particularly in the areas of employment and political decision-making, to accelerate the de facto situation of equality for women in Bulgaria. The Committee suggests that the Government give further consideration to the nature and role of affirmative action. Experts of the Committee could be called upon to provide further information and assistance to the Government in that respect.

255. The Committee recommends that legislative measures protecting women against all forms of violence, both public and private, be strengthened. In particular, provision should be made for the prosecution of offenders even in the absence of a complaint by the victim. The Committee urges the Government to develop an array of medical, psychological and other measures to assist women victims of violence and to change prevailing attitudes to domestic violence, which view it as a private problem, and to encourage women to seek redress. A range of strategies are available, including the utilization of popular music, theatre and so on, with the cooperation of civil society, including women's organizations. The Committee requests that the Government of Bulgaria include information on steps taken to address domestic violence in its next report.

256. The Committee encourages Bulgaria to implement its intention to cooperate at the regional and international levels with regard to the problem of trafficking in women and their exploitation through prostitution. The Committee suggests that, in order to tackle the problem of trafficking in women, it is essential to address women's economic vulnerability, which is the root cause of the problem. In addition, national legislation should be reviewed and amended in accordance with the Convention, effective administrative and police structures need to be created, media sensitization and training campaigns conducted and the work of women's non-governmental organizations in this area promoted. The Committee also requests that the Government of Bulgaria

include in its next report yearly data on the number of women trafficked into Bulgaria and the number of those women who have been returned to their countries of origin, as well as the number of women trafficked out of Bulgaria to other countries and the number of people engaged in trafficking who have been arrested, prosecuted and sentenced.

257. The Committee recommends that the Government of Bulgaria develop appropriate measures to address poverty amongst women, particularly the most vulnerable women, including elderly women, women with children and women with disabilities.

258. The Committee urges the Government of Bulgaria to undertake efforts to collect statistical information on the social, economic and political status of women of different ethnic minorities and to ensure that such data is available to the Committee in the next periodic report.

259. The Committee recommends that special measures be taken to encourage women to become entrepreneurs. Training should be provided and measures taken to facilitate access to credit and loans for women, in particular rural women. The Committee requests that the next report provide detailed information on the involvement of women in economic operations, including information about discriminatory practices against women in employment and measures taken to counteract such practices.

260. The Committee urges the Government to facilitate consultations between Bulgarian women's non-governmental organizations and other European women's non-governmental organizations, in order to discuss Bulgarian women's issues and receive any necessary assistance.

261. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Bulgaria of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Bulgaria, and particularly its Government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard. It also requests the Government of Bulgaria to continue to disseminate widely, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

Indonesia

262. The Committee considered the combined second and third periodic reports of Indonesia (CEDAW/C/IDN/2-3) at its 377th meeting, on 2 February 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.377).

263. In introducing the reports, the representative stated that in terms of Indonesia's State ideology, the *Pancasila* and the 1945 constitution, as well as the Basic Guidelines of State Policy of 1978, women's right to equality was explicitly guaranteed. However, the de facto situation is that women remain unequal to men in terms of rights and opportunities because of a combination of traditional and cultural practices and certain laws that are contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of the principle of equality. The view that the man is the head of the family and the woman the manager of the household reflects this.

264. The Government of Indonesia established a national machinery in 1978, well before its ratification of the Convention in 1984. In its current form, the national machinery consists of a State Ministry for the Role of Women, which operates at both the national and provincial levels and has responsibility for policy formulation, coordination, consultation, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation of the status and of the role of women in development.

265. The representative reported that in 1994 the State Ministry had established a Planning and Foreign Affairs Unit to enhance its coordinating and advocacy capacity. Its research and outreach work was being facilitated through the establishment of women's studies centres at institutions of higher learning. Also, as a first step in engendering the national development plan, the Government had developed a profile of the status and role of women in all sectors of development. The representative noted that, in spite of that progress, the national machinery was still underresourced, both financially and in terms of human resources.

266. As a follow-up to the Beijing Conference, the Government had launched a national movement - the Outlook of Harmonious Gender Partnership between Men and Women in the Family, Society and Development - with a view to inculcating values of equality in the citizenry. It had also translated the Platform for Action and the Convention into local languages. However, the representative reported that the particular focus of the Government was on the four core areas of poverty eradication, education, health and empowerment.

267. In the sphere of political decision-making, the representative noted that even though there were no legal barriers to women's participation, it remained low because of traditional attitudes. The Government intended to address the situation through consultation with different sectoral ministries, institutions, non-governmental organizations and political parties.

268. Indonesia did not yet have specific laws and regulations relating to trafficking in women, but it was proposing to undertake the rehabilitation of women victims. Likewise, it was also proposing to deal with the specific issues of women's human rights within the general context of human rights violations through the newly established independent National Commission on Human Rights. There was no specific framework for dealing with violence against women. Prostitution was formally banned by the Government, but since its practice through the ages had proved very difficult to eradicate, the Government of Indonesia had taken steps to localize prostitution, that is, to leave the practice only within specifically authorized areas. The Government was also making efforts to rehabilitate women involved in prostitution.

269. Indonesia was a source of considerable migrant labour for her neighbours and the Middle East. The majority of those workers were women, mostly from rural backgrounds. They tended to face problems, including violation of rights, such as torture and rape. The Government had established a computerized system to monitor the mobility of women overseas and was intensifying the pre-departure training of women.

270. The representative stated that Indonesia would be taking concrete measures to revise gender-discriminatory legislation, to ratify United Nations human rights treaties and to sensitize the courts with regard to sexual offenders. Equal rights to inheritance between women and men had been established in a Supreme Court judgement in 1960 and polygamy had been outlawed. However, the prevalence of socio-cultural values and traditional norms reduce the impact of the legal framework.

271. The representative reported that the current economic crisis affects both women and men, although the Government has taken measures at both the central and regional levels to provide for equal access to employment for disadvantaged women, in addition to existing efforts to encourage entrepreneurship and access to resources such as land and credit.

272. Finally, the Government intends to pursue its commitment to the advancement of women on different fronts and has set itself goals and deadlines, including the reduction of the maternal mortality rate by the end of 2018 and the near eradication of illiteracy by 1999. The Government intends to enhance the status and role of women in development as it seeks to achieve a just and prosperous society.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

273. The Committee notes with satisfaction the combined second and third periodic reports of Indonesia, which are frank, detailed and demonstrate a desire to move the women's agenda forward.

274. Nonetheless, the Committee expresses disappointment that change has not taken place as fast as it should have in Indonesia and that many of the problems that have been identified during consideration of the State party's initial report remain unresolved.

275. The Committee appreciates the Government's efforts to address the large number of questions posed by the pre-session working group. The additional information provided by the delegation in the oral presentation raises a series of further questions.

Positive aspects

276. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the Convention forms part of the domestic law of Indonesia and has been cited before courts in discrimination cases.

277. The Committee is pleased to learn that the Indonesian Government has addressed the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action through the introduction of an Indonesian National Action Plan.

278. The Committee expresses approval of the fact that Indonesia has established a Ministry for the Role of Women in the 1970s, even before its ratification of the Convention. The creation of women's studies centres is also considered to be a significant achievement by the Government.

279. The Committee is pleased to note the role of women's non-governmental organizations in Indonesia, which have a history of strong and effective action.

280. The Committee recognizes the success of the Government's family planning programme. The Committee views this as an example of the Government's ability to take highly effective steps to improve the situation of women. However, some concern is expressed that the focus of the programme is so predominantly upon women, and Committee members emphasize the need also to take into account men's responsibility for family planning.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

281. The Committee notes the current economic crisis in Indonesia and urges the Government not to allow it to become a justification for failing to implement the Convention.

282. The Committee is convinced that the existence of cultural attitudes that confine women to the roles of mothers and housewives presents a great obstacle to the advancement of women. Policies and programmes developed on the basis of those stereotypes limit women's participation and entitlements, thereby impeding implementation of the Convention. The Committee expresses the view that cultural and religious values cannot be allowed to undermine the universality of women's rights. It also stated its belief that culture is not a static concept and that the core values in Indonesian society are not inconsistent with the advancement of women.

283. The Committee notes Indonesia's failure to collect data on certain issues that are crucial to the well-being of women, such as the prevalence of violence against women. Without such data, neither the Government nor the Committee can accurately monitor the situation of women's equality in Indonesia and the Committee could not offer recommendations as to what measures might be taken to combat the problem.

Principal areas of concern

284. The Committee is very concerned at the existence of laws that are not in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. It notes that discrimination against women exists in laws regarding:

(a) Family and marriage, including polygamy; age for marriage; divorce and the requirement that a wife obtain her husband's consent for a passport;

(b) Economic rights, including ownership and inheritance of land; access to loans and credits; entitlement to social, health and other benefits in the labour sector and the requirement that a wife obtain her husband's consent for night employment;

(c) Health, including the requirement that the wife obtain her husband's consent with regard to sterilization or abortion, even when her life is in danger.

285. The Committee also expresses concern that there is no clear definition of discrimination modelled on article 1 of the Convention in the constitution or other national laws.

286. The Committee is pleased to note the eradication of discrimination at the *de jure* level in a number of areas, including inheritance, but it remains concerned about how equal the situation actually is in practice and how many women benefit from the application of civil law.

287. The Committee was informed that Muslims may choose whether Islamic or civil law is to be applied to them. However, the Committee is concerned as to who decides this issue, and to what extent Muslim women are able to choose to have civil law applied to their affairs rather than Islamic law.

288. The Committee expresses concern that marriages between partners of different religions are prohibited de facto in certain regions of Indonesia.

289. The Committee expresses great concern about existing social, religious and cultural norms that recognize men as the head of the family and breadwinner and confine women to the roles of mother and wife, which are reflected in various laws, Government policies and guidelines. It is unclear what steps the Government is proposing to take to modify such attitudes, which present a serious obstacle to the advancement of women in Indonesia. Traditional gender stereotypes are also perpetuated in formal education; and textbooks have not been revised to eliminate such stereotypes.

290. The Committee expresses concern that the full implementation of the Indonesian national plan of action, which represents Indonesia's follow-up to its commitments at the Fourth World Conference on Women, might be impeded by prevailing religious and cultural norms that constitute the backdrop to Indonesia's legal and policy efforts towards women's equality.

291. The Committee is concerned about women's low rates of participation in education, as well as the high level of illiteracy among women, especially in the rural areas. It notes that education is a basic human right and that while the State has made some efforts to facilitate the education of poor but gifted children, the Committee remains concerned about the access to education of all children, including those from minority groups.

292. The Committee is concerned that the information provided demonstrates that women are still employed in lower-paid and lower-skilled work. It notes with concern that the predominant view appears to be that married women might provide supplemental income for a family, but that there is very little emphasis on the right of women to develop a career of their own.

293. The Committee is seriously concerned about the lack of adequate laws to address violence against women, as well as the lack of systematic sex disaggregated data collection

and documentation on the extent, forms and prevalence of violence against women in Indonesia.

294. The Committee is gravely concerned about information it has received with regard to violations of women's human rights in East Timor.

295. The Committee is concerned that the information provided on the situation of women in areas of armed conflict reflects a limited understanding of the problem. The Government's remarks are confined to the participation of women in the armed forces and do not address the vulnerability of women to sexual exploitation in conflict situations, as well as a range of other human rights abuses affecting women in such contexts.

296. The Committee notes the information on the situation of migrant women, which has been presented in the form of a supplement to the report. However, the Committee remains concerned that this does not include discussion of reports of the death as a result of mistreatment and abuses of Indonesian migrant women abroad, as well as cases of trafficking for the purposes of prostitution. It is concerned that the Government lacks the mechanisms to respond to abuses of Indonesian women abroad.

297. The Committee is gravely concerned about reported cases of coercion in the course of the implementation of the family planning programme. The Committee points out that such coercion contravenes the Government's obligations under the Convention to ensure women's reproductive rights to freedom of choice and informed consent with respect to methods of family planning.

298. The Committee is concerned that limited information has been provided on the problem of HIV/AIDS. There is no data on the extent of the problem, rates of increase or any sex-disaggregated data. The Committee is particularly concerned that the problem of HIV/AIDS is being attributed to women in prostitution. Concern is also expressed about programmes designed to "clean the city streets" of prostitutes whenever there is a major international event in Jakarta. Information provided to the Committee by other sources suggests that women taken off the streets have been subjected to forced vaginal examinations.

299. The Committee is seriously concerned about the extent of unemployment amongst women, particularly those from female-headed households, in the light of the current economic crisis. It is also concerned about wage disparities between female and male workers, job-segregation in the workforce, with women disproportionately occupying low-skilled and low-paying jobs, as well as women's unequal access to social security, employment and health benefits.

300. The Committee is concerned that not enough is being done to address the issue of prostitution and trafficking in women as envisaged in article 6 of the Convention. It is also concerned that not enough is being done to assist these women through socio-economic and health programmes and that preventive measures and re-socialization efforts are aimed principally at prostitutes and do not address male clients.

Suggestions and recommendations

301. The Committee recommends that, in its next report, the Government of Indonesia fully describe the results of all measures to implement the Beijing Platform for Action as described in the Indonesian National Plan of Action and the Outlook of Harmonious Gender Partnership between Men and Women in the Family, Society and Development. The Committee also recommends that the Indonesian Government take account of the Committee's remarks on religious and cultural values and their effect on the implementation of these initiatives.

302. The Committee recommends that the Government take appropriate measures to mitigate the negative impact that the current economic crisis may have on women in Indonesia, particularly in the areas of education, health and employment.

303. The Committee urges the Government to collect, as a matter of priority, data on the extent, causes and consequences of the problem of violence against women in Indonesia. The Committee also emphasizes the need for the gender sensitization of authorities, including the judiciary, law enforcement officers, lawyers, social workers, health professionals or others who are directly involved in combating violence against women.

304. The Committee recommends that the Government give priority to hastening the pace of progress on women's issues in Indonesia. The Committee urges the Government to take stronger measures to address the contradiction that currently exists between the Government's stated commitment to the principles contained in the Convention and the actual situation facing women in Indonesia.

305. The Committee recommends that in Indonesia's fourth periodic report efforts be made to consolidate the written replies with other parts of the presentation, to avoid overlap and to enable the Committee to spend more time in dialogue with the State party. The Committee also requests that the report pay particular attention to the priority areas identified in the questions of the Committee.

306. The Committee requests that in its next report, the Government of Indonesia provide information about government-supported women's studies programmes and centres. The Committee also requests information on Government efforts to revise textbooks to reflect values of gender equality.

307. The Committee urges the Government to take immediate steps to eradicate the practice of polygamy in Indonesia and to change the other discriminatory laws identified by the Committee in paragraph 284 above.

308. The Committee recommends that the Government take steps to ensure that women in Indonesia have the right to free choice of spouse as provided for in article 16, subparagraph 1 (b), of the Convention.

309. The Committee recommends that appropriate measures be taken to ensure that women in East Timor are not subject to violations of their human rights.

310. The Committee recommends that the Government address the issue of trafficking in women and prostitution, in accordance with article 6 of the Convention, and establish, *inter alia*, socio-economic and health programmes to assist women in this context.

311. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Indonesia of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Indonesia, and particularly its government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

3. Combined second, third and fourth periodic reports

Dominican Republic

312. The Committee considered the second, third and fourth periodic reports of the Dominican Republic (CEDAW/C/DOM/2-3 and CEDAW/C/DOM/4) at its 379th and 380th meetings, on 3 February 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.379 and 380).

313. In introducing the reports, the representative of the Dominican Republic noted that, since its ratification by the Government in 1982, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had been an instrument for Dominican women to overcome their subordination and to change the patriarchal order.

314. Referring in particular to the fourth periodic report, the representative described it as an instrument of self-assessment and stocktaking. It provided an opportunity for assessing developments that had occurred in various governmental and societal sectors and also for identifying obstacles and areas for further change.

315. Among progress achieved in the legal sphere, the representative noted in particular the adoption of a law against domestic violence (*Ley contra la Violencia Intrafamilial*). She referred to the Government's ongoing efforts to put in place practical measures to ensure compliance with the new law, such as awareness and information campaigns, training for law-enforcement officers and the creation of special units to handle violence complaints.

316. Other legal measures included the adoption of an education bill establishing the principle of equality of opportunity between the sexes, the revision of the electoral law establishing a quota of 25 per cent for women candidates in municipal and congressional elections and the revision of the agrarian reform law. The representative also noted that there was widespread support, especially in the women's movement, for further legal reform aimed at the elimination of discriminatory provisions, particularly in the civil code, and for the inclusion of the principle of equality in the constitution.

317. The representative pointed to the creation of several mechanisms to ensure implementation of the legal and normative framework for women. She noted in particular the strengthening of the Dirección General de Promoción de la Mujer through a substantial increase in human and financial resources, combined with a commitment in principle to elevate the Directorate to a secretariat of state or ministry for women's affairs. She also pointed to the establishment of an intersectoral committee for the follow-up to, and implementation of, the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

318. While there had been progress in women's political and social participation, this was an area where further progress was needed. Most notably, 31 per cent of the judges of the Supreme Court of Justice were women. There had also been an increase in the number of women working in the Foreign Service. While important changes had also taken place in the areas of education for women, especially in terms of their access to all levels of education, sexism persisted in the professional sphere.

319. The representative informed the Committee that the economic situation of the country since the early 1990s was characterized by macroeconomic control and stabilization efforts. Poverty remained the major challenge and its eradication was a priority objective for the Government. Since poverty affected women in particular ways and limited their economic participation and access to services, specific projects for women, in particular women heads of households, formed part of the Government's poverty eradication efforts.

320. The representative concluded that the new Government, which had been installed in mid-1996, had embarked on a policy of reform and modernization. While the impact of reform on the situation of women could not yet be evaluated, she noted that the Dirección General de Promoción de la Mujer and the national women's movement remained committed to ensuring that a gender approach was reflected in those reforms. The Convention would provide continuing guidance into the next millennium on measures to improve the status of women.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

321. The Committee commends the Government for the preparation of a new report in late 1997, that is, the fourth periodic report, which is considered together with its second and third periodic report submitted in 1993. It welcomes it as a well-structured report that provides frank and clear information on the situation of women in the Dominican Republic. Together with the exhaustive replies provided to the Committee's numerous questions, the presentation gives a comprehensive view of the efforts undertaken by the new Government. This is indicative of the political will of the Government to carry out its commitments under international human rights law, and especially its desire to achieve full compliance with its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

322. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of the Dominican Republic for its large and high-level delegation headed by the Minister for Women's Affairs, which has enabled the Committee to obtain a realistic picture of progress made and of challenges ahead in the achievement of the equal rights of women.

Positive aspects

323. The Committee welcomes the fact that the Government, while undergoing a period of change, reform and modernization after the last election in 1996, has made great efforts to ensure the systematic inclusion of a gender perspective in its new policies and programmes. The catalytic role of the Dirección General de Promoción de la Mujer and of the women's movement in this regard are particularly noted.

324. The Committee welcomes the many important initiatives and measures undertaken in different areas by the Dirección General in a short period of time and commends it for its ongoing work on a number of legislative drafts aimed at repealing or revising discriminatory laws and provisions.

325. The Committee notes with appreciation the adoption of several new laws and legal revisions to bring the domestic situation into greater conformity with the Convention. In particular, the Committee applauds the adoption, in 1997, of the law against domestic violence following the country's ratification, in 1995, of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará). The Committee furthermore commends the Government on the holistic and integrated approach it is taking to address the issue of violence against women, which includes legislative measures, public awareness campaigns, training and sensitization measures for law-enforcement officials and the judiciary, and the establishment of special units to handle domestic violence complaints.

326. The Committee notes with satisfaction the revision of the agrarian reform law giving women the right to inherit land, a reform of particular importance to rural women. Changes in the Education Law were commended, as is the establishment, in the Electoral Law, of a 25 per cent quota for women candidates in municipal and congressional elections. The Committee also notes women's above-average representation in secondary and higher education. While illiteracy continues to be a concern, the rate of female illiteracy is lower than that of males, which is an exception when compared to the situation of illiteracy in most other countries.

327. The Committee commends the Government for devoting a special section in the fourth periodic report to women heads of households, thus showing its sensitivity to the particular constraints and vulnerabilities faced by this group of women, which makes up one fourth of all Dominican households.

328. The Committee commends the role of non-governmental organizations and of the women's movement in awareness-raising and in lobbying lawmakers and the Government to focus on women's issues, and their active work in providing services to women.

329. The Committee notes with satisfaction the establishment of a governmental mechanism to follow up and implement the commitments of the Platform for Action.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

330. The Committee notes the persistence of a high poverty level and of situations of extreme poverty, with 57 per cent of the Dominican population living below the poverty line. As women are most affected by poverty, which is aggravated by discrimination and inequality, this constitutes a serious obstacle to the full implementation of the Convention in the Dominican Republic.

331. Although the Dominican Republic is a secular State, the Committee notes the absence, in practice, of a clear separation of Church and State. The Committee considers such an intermingling of the secular and religious spheres as a serious impediment to full implementation of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern

332. The Committee expresses concern that, notwithstanding legislative achievements, discriminatory provisions continue to exist, including in the civil code, the nationality law and marriage and family laws, especially in areas such as the administration of marital property. Discriminatory provisions regarding unmarried women, as well as single mothers, persist in social security provisions and in land inheritance rights under the agrarian reform law. The Committee notes with concern the continuing absence of the principle of equality from the country's constitution.

333. The Committee expresses deep concern about the economic consequences of women's poverty. Women's migration to urban areas and to foreign countries render them susceptible to sexual exploitation, including trafficking and sex tourism, and prostitution. The lack of creation of jobs for women in growth sectors, including in the tourism industry, contributes to the high percentage of women migrating abroad in search of work. The Committee is concerned that notwithstanding the high level of poverty among women, and especially of women-headed households, no affirmative action measures are being taken to support women's efforts to break the cycle of poverty.

334. The Committee expresses concern about the rigid social codes adhered to in the country and the persistence of machismo, which is reflected in areas such as women's low participation in public life and decision-making, in the stereotypical portrayal of women's role in the family, social life and a segregated labour market. Emphasizing that legal measures alone are not sufficient, the Committee notes the failure of the Government to undertake comprehensive and systematic public awareness and information campaigns to change stereotypical attitudes that are detrimental to women's equality.

335. The Committee expresses concern that, while close ties exist between the Dirección General de Promoción de la Mujer and women's groups, insufficient cooperation and networking has been established between the Dirección General and women in decision-making in all areas of political, economic and social life.

336. The Committee is deeply concerned about the situation of women workers. While the high percentage of women employed in free-trade zones is laudable, because it gives them a financial footing, women workers suffer considerable discrimination in income and benefits. The Committee notes with concern the absence of efforts by the Government to ensure and enforce compliance with wage, benefits and workers' safety laws, including compliance with International Labour Organization Conventions. Women's overall high unemployment rate, the particularly insecure situation of domestic workers and single mothers are also of concern to the Committee. The Committee is further concerned that women often have higher levels of education than men but are paid less than men for work of equal value.

337. The Committee expresses deep concern with respect to the high rate of maternal mortality which is caused, as is noted in the report, by toxaemia, haemorrhages during childbirth and clandestine abortions; the Committee also notes that toxaemia may be caused by induced abortions. The high rate of maternal mortality, in conjunction with the fact that abortions in the Dominican Republic are absolutely and under all circumstances illegal, cause very great concern to the Committee and draws attention to the implications of the situation for women's enjoyment of the right to life.

Suggestions and recommendations

338. The Committee encourages the Government to ensure that the implementation of all provisions of the Convention proceeds without obstacles and requests the Government to include in its next report detailed information on the practical implementation of the Convention, emphasizing the impact of policies and programmes aimed at achieving women's equality.

339. The Committee urges the Government to provide the Dirección General with the necessary authority and with adequate human and financial resources to implement special programmes for women, to influence all governmental

decision-making and to ensure that a gender perspective is consistently applied in all Government policies and programmes.

340. The Committee encourages the Dirección General, using the model of the Honorary Committee of Women Advisers to the Senate, to intensify cooperation with other sectors and entities of civil, political and economic life, so as to ensure more systematic attention to gender issues in these areas.

341. The Committee urges the Government to make women a priority in its poverty eradication strategy. Particular emphasis should be placed on the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all poverty eradication efforts and measures should be taken to ensure to women the enjoyment of their rights in such efforts.

342. The Committee recommends that the Government continue its efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in all its reforms. It also suggests that the Government identify priority areas for targeted actions for women. The reduction and elimination of illiteracy, the creation of jobs and the implementation of labour legislation and reforms are suggested for such priority attention.

343. The Committee encourages the Government to continue to give attention to women heads of households and to conduct further research into their situation with a view to developing sound and effective policies on strengthening their socio-economic situation and the prevention of poverty and to ensure that needed services and support are provided to such households.

344. The Committee urges the Government to improve the collection and use of data disaggregated by sex, so that the strong factual basis for the picture of the de facto situation of women in all areas covered by the Convention may be maintained and measures targeted more carefully to specific groups. Areas related to women's health, work, employment, wages and benefits, to the types and incidence of violence against women and the impact of measures against violence against women should receive particular emphasis. Data should also be disaggregated by age, and by other criteria such as urban/rural.

345. The Committee urges the Government to continue its integrated approach to the elimination and prevention of violence against women. In particular, the collection of data and information on the incidence and types of violence against women should be improved and attention should be given to so-called crimes of passion, their frequency and the response of law enforcement.

346. The Committee strongly urges the Government to pursue bilateral agreements and to cooperate in multilateral efforts to reduce and eradicate traffic in women, to protect women migrant workers, such as domestic workers, from exploitation, including sexual exploitation. Such agreements should be concluded, in particular with those countries that are a primary destination for Dominican women workers. Public information campaigns aimed at particularly vulnerable groups of women should also be conducted to alert them to potential dangers when seeking work overseas.

347. The Committee invites the Government to conduct regular assessments of the impact of the 25 per cent quota regulation contained in the electoral law to ensure the full implementation of the law and the achievement of higher percentages of women in decision-making.

348. The Committee urges the Government to strengthen vocational and technical training and career counselling for young women and to increase its information activities regarding non-traditional jobs for women in order to reduce job segregation patterns and the wage gap between women and men.

349. The Committee invites the Government to strengthen educational programmes for all, both girls and boys, on sexual and reproductive health, on combating the spread of HIV/AIDS and on family planning. It also invites the Government to review legislation in the area of women's reproductive and sexual health, in particular with regard to abortion, in order to give full compliance to articles 10 and 12 of the Convention.

350. The Committee encourages the Government to give full attention to the needs of rural women and to ensure an active and participatory role for rural women in the design, implementation and monitoring of all policies and programmes that are intended to benefit them, including in areas such as access to health and social services, income-generation projects and housing. The Government should also consider the establishment of special banks and of improved access to credit for rural women.

351. The Committee urges the Government to take steps to ensure the de facto separation of the secular and religious spheres, with a view to ensuring the full implementation of the Convention.

352. The Committee urges the Government to continue its law reform efforts aimed at the elimination of all remaining discriminatory laws and provisions. Laws such as the civil code, the nationality law and the labour law should be targeted for priority action to bring them into full conformity with the Convention.

353. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in the Dominican Republic of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of the Dominican Republic, and particularly its government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard. The Committee also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

4. Combined third and fourth periodic reports

Mexico

354. The Committee considered the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Mexico (CEDAW/C/MEX/3-4 and Add.1) at its 376th and 377th meetings, on 30 January 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.376 and 377).

355. Introducing the report, the representative stated that the Mexican constitution guaranteed equal rights for women and men. Furthermore, the constitution explicitly mentioned women's equal rights in the areas of education, family planning, nationality, employment, wages and political participation.

356. In order to implement the commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, Mexico had established a national machinery for the advancement of women, under the Ministry of the Interior, which was in charge of putting into practice the National Programme for Women: Alliance for Equality, the document containing Mexico's strategies for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Executive Coordination Office of the national programme for women was responsible for bringing together and coordinating inter-agency activities, which would allow the full implementation of the National Programme for Women and other governmental programmes. Thus, the Consultative Council and the Social Comptroller were integrated as organs for counselling, following up and surveying the programme. These two bodies were integrated by women belonging to different sectors of society.

357. The Government of Mexico had taken steps to conform its national policies with international agreements on the status of women. In January 1994, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had established a coordination unit for international women's issues that monitored the implementation of international agreements. Furthermore, the National Human Rights Commission analysed whether the Mexican law complies with international agreements on women's and children's rights and proposed amendments thereon to the current law.

358. The representative reported that Mexico had established quotas to promote the participation of women in political decision-making. The federal election legislation called on political parties to establish a limit of participation of candidates of the same gender. Subsequently, two main political parties had established quotas to ensure that at least 30 per cent of their candidates were women and one had established a preferential option to select women.

359. Mexico had enacted special laws and reformed the civil and criminal code for the Federal District in order to combat and punish domestic violence. Furthermore, consultations had started at the local level to reform the civil and criminal codes of the majority of the states of Mexico with regard to violence against women. In addition, special programmes had been launched to support women victims of violence.

360. Girls and women were under-represented in higher education; however, their enrolment has increased in recent years. The rate of illiteracy in Mexico was declining but remained high among older women and rural and indigenous women. This had led to the establishment of compensatory programmes aimed at overcoming the educational backwardness in rural and indigenous communities, which were in a state of extreme poverty or were isolated and lacked access to normal educational services. The National Institute of Adult Education addressed its action to a population comprised mainly of women and also offered non-formal employment training services. The National Educational Promotion Council operated in settlements with less than 150 inhabitants with the objective of establishing schools in the communities themselves.

361. The representative stated that women in the paid labour force had to cope with the double burden of work and family responsibilities and tended to be concentrated in the lower paid professions. The Mexican Government paid special attention to the need to train women under the Training Fellowships for Unemployed Workers Programme of the Ministry of Labour.

362. Maternal mortality had declined significantly, owing to awareness-raising and training campaigns. Furthermore, the increased use of contraceptives had led to a decline in fertility. In order to make health care more responsive to women's needs, the Ministry of Health had launched a programme to incorporate gender in all activities of its

policy and programmes. Health policies and programmes have also been implemented in order to decrease and prevent the occurrence of cervix-uterine and breast cancer.

363. Households headed by women were most vulnerable to poverty. In order to combat poverty, the Mexican Government had been implementing the Food, Health and Education Programme, established in 1997. The Programme was establishing a series of affirmative measures in favour of the female population, after recognizing the disadvantages faced by women and girls in terms of food, education and health. The Government also provided microcredits to women and supported women entrepreneurs.

364. The situation of rural women in Mexico was very diverse, depending on their ethnic origin and the region. However, women in rural areas generally had less access to education and health care. The national machinery had launched policies and programmes to improve the situation of women in rural areas, such as the conformation of a rural women national network, in order to link governmental organizations, with the goal of promoting integral development.

365. The representative concluded by stating that Mexican women had advanced significantly in recent years, but still faced many obstacles to the full enjoyment of their rights. She underlined the commitment of the Mexican Government to continue to design policies aimed at granting women and girls equal treatment and opportunities. She also recognized that the most profound changes were born in the deepest values and attitudes of society, which could only be achieved through processes that demanded time and a strong political will.

Concluding comments

Introduction

366. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the third and fourth reports submitted by the Government of Mexico, which reflect the current state of compliance with the Convention in Mexico and the programmes established and actions taken to improve the status of women.

367. The Committee points out that the significance attached by the Mexican Government to the Convention has also been illustrated by the high level of the delegation representing the State party at the session.

368. The Committee thanks the Government of Mexico for its oral report, as well as its replies to the Committee's questions and its representative's statement, translated into both French and English.

369. The Committee expresses its thanks for the Mexican Government's exhaustive and specific replies to all the questions asked and for the updated information provided in the statement of the representative of the Government of Mexico.

370. The Committee congratulates the Government of Mexico for the achievements made since the last report in terms of both legislative reform and real progress in improving the status of women.

371. The Committee thanks the representative of Mexico for the transparency with which she discussed the socio-economic and political situation of women in her country and her Government's efforts to implement the Convention and for her objective and analytical presentation of the obstacles to the advancement of women in Mexico.

372. The Committee notes that the Mexican Government's report and its replies to the Committee's questions offer valuable, comprehensive information on the various programmes implemented and planned by the Government of Mexico. The Committee considers the specific information provided on the situation of indigenous women in Chiapas to be extremely important.

Positive aspects

373. The Committee expresses its satisfaction at the Mexican Government's efforts to implement the Convention through many programmes, either in progress or planned, for the advancement of Mexican women and commends the legal framework established for implementing the Convention. The Committee stresses that the Mexican Government has adopted the Platform for Action without reservations and has introduced a national action programme to implement the Platform and for the follow-up of commitments made in Beijing.

374. The Committee notes that the constitution provides guarantees for the protection of women's and men's rights, both as individuals and as groups.

375. The Committee stresses the importance of the establishment of the National Programme for Women: Alliance for Equality on 8 March 1995, which is a national mechanism to promote activities designed to improve the status of women that was binding on Federal Government offices and parastatal organizations. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the executive coordinator of the National Programme for Women, which coordinates all efforts to improve the status of women, is at the high level of under-secretary of State.

376. The Committee recognizes with satisfaction that the Convention serves as a framework for both the National Programme for Women and the National Human Rights Commission and that the efforts to implement the Convention are implicit in the National Development Plan.

377. The Committee notes with satisfaction that during the period from 1993, important constitutional reforms have been introduced in order to advance the status of Mexican women and implement the Convention and that constitutional reform has been followed by changes in other legislation.

378. The Committee notes with appreciation that pursuant to constitutional reforms, primary and secondary education is now compulsory for women and girls.

379. The Committee observes with satisfaction that the civil, civil procedure and penal codes have been modified in order to facilitate proceedings with regard to violence against women in the family, including marital rape. It also commends the 1996 Federal District law to prevent and assist victims of intrafamilial violence and the fact that Mexico has signed the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (the Convention of Belém do Pará).

380. The Committee notes with appreciation the recent adoption by the Congress of the Union of an addendum to the Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures, which states that national political parties should consider providing in their statutes that no more than 70 per cent of the candidates for deputy or senator should be of the same gender.

381. The Committee notes with satisfaction the efforts being made to implement affirmative action programmes in a number of areas, including the Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures and that these demonstrate a clear understanding of paragraph 1 of article 4 of the Convention.

382. The Committee welcomes the Mexican Government's initiative in establishing an information, documentation and research system on the situation of women, and considers this to be an important tool in designing better policies to promote equality, which would also reflect women's non-remunerative work.

383. The Committee acknowledges with satisfaction the considerable number of women working in the judicial system and that women occupy 19 per cent of high-level judicial posts.

384. The Committee welcomes the reinstitution of the Women, Health and Development Programme in 1995 and the elaboration of the Reproductive Health and Family Planning Programme, 1995–2000, both of which are evidence of the efforts to improve the quality of health care for women in the country.

385. The Committee commends the Government's initiative to encourage women's non-governmental organizations to participate in programmes to implement the Convention.

386. The Committee commends the Mexican Government for objecting to reservations lodged by some States parties to the Convention.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

387. The Committee notes that, while the Convention is part of the Supreme Law and its implementation is compulsory at the federal level, the specific legislation of a number of Mexican states contains elements that discriminate against women and are not in keeping with the provisions of national legislation and the Convention.

388. The Committee notes that implementation of the Convention is hampered by the fact that Mexico is a territorially vast, multi-ethnic and multicultural developing country with a difficult economic situation that affects the most vulnerable strata of society, and women in particular.

Principal areas of concern

389. The Committee expresses its concern with regard to the discrimination faced by indigenous women, where the health, education and employment indicators are below the national average. It also expresses concern about the situation of rural women living in poverty and in extreme poverty.

390. The Committee expresses concern with regard to the situation of indigenous women and children, particularly in the state of Chiapas since, in conflict zones where the police or armed forces are operating, women are often the innocent victims of violence.

391. The Committee expresses concern with regard to de facto discrimination, referring, in this regard, to the situation of women workers in factories where, according to information received from various sources, Mexican labour legislation, particularly legislation on the reproductive rights of women workers, is being violated. The Committee also refers to the situation in certain areas where the principle of equal salary for work of equal value is not applied and where women of child-bearing age are subject to mandatory pregnancy tests as a condition of employment.

392. The Committee notes that the report does not describe cases where the Convention has been used to support claims for women's human rights. The Committee is concerned that the absence of such cases is either because women lack awareness of the Convention and its primacy in domestic law or because they lack sufficient resources to access the legal system.

393. The Committee notes that, in spite of the legislative measures Mexico has taken, violence against women, particularly domestic violence, continues to be a serious problem in Mexican society.

394. The Committee notes the high, and unsatisfied, demand for contraceptive methods, in particular among poor urban women, rural women and adolescents. It also notes with concern cases in some localities in which contraceptive methods have been used without women's express consent, which is required under Mexican law.

395. The Committee expresses serious concern at the possible existence of an illicit traffic in women. It notes that if there is trafficking in women, that this is a serious violation of their human rights.

396. The Committee warns that, in the present circumstances, the gender-equality policy in the regular educational system may be affected by the decentralization of education in Mexico.

397. The Committee draws attention to the lack of access to health-care services for children and old people.

398. The Committee considers that the policies to promote equality within the family are insufficient, since stereotyped roles are perpetuated in the family by deeply rooted traditions of men's superiority. In addition, the Committee notes that certain legal provisions might continue to promote inequality and traditional roles within the family.

399. The Committee refers to the high rate of teenage pregnancy and the lack of access for women in all states to easy and swift abortion.

400. The Committee expresses concern at the absence of information about Mexican women who migrated abroad.

Suggestions and recommendations

401. The Committee encourages Mexico to continue to allow women's non-governmental organizations to participate in the implementation of the Convention.

402. The Committee recommends that, despite the structure of the Federal Government, the constitution and the Convention of Belém do Pará should be implemented throughout the country in order to speed up legal change in all states, and requests the Mexican Government to provide, in its next report, information on the measures it has taken in that regard.

403. The Committee recommends that the Mexican Government continue its efforts to reduce poverty among rural women, particularly indigenous women, and to work together with non-governmental organizations, making special efforts to promote education, employment and health programmes conducive to the integration of women into the development process, both as beneficiaries and as protagonists. In view of the relatively high growth levels of the Mexican economy that have been mentioned, the Committee would welcome a more equitable redistribution of wealth among the population.

404. The Committee suggests that Mexico evaluate areas, such as the private sector, that are not covered by affirmative action and, in its next report, submit a consolidated evaluation of all affirmative-action initiatives.

405. The Committee proposes that, in its next report, Mexico should provide more information about existing mechanisms to enable women to seek redress from the courts on the basis of the Convention.

406. The Committee expresses the hope that the Government will continue to monitor compliance with labour laws in the factories and pursue the work of raising awareness among factory employers.

407. The Committee also requests the Ministry of Agrarian Reform to continue its institutional intervention to persuade public land (*ejido*) assemblies to allocate to women the parcels of land to which they are entitled.

408. The Committee recommends that the Government consider the advisability of revising the legislation criminalizing abortion and suggests that it weigh the possibility of authorizing the use of the RU486 contraceptive, which is cheap and easy to use, as soon as it becomes available.

409. The Committee requests that information be given in the next report on the impact of programmes to reduce and prevent teenage pregnancy.

410. The Committee recommends the introduction of training for health personnel with regard to women's human rights, and particularly their right, freely and without coercion, to choose means of contraception.

411. The Committee suggests that the Government continue to work for the adoption of nationwide legislation on all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, adjusting state laws to national laws.

412. The Committee requests the Government to consider the possibility of implementing an integrated, long-term plan for combating violence. Such a plan could include taking legal action, training judicial, law enforcement and health personnel, informing women about their rights and about the Convention and strengthening victims' services.

413. The Committee recommends that strong action be taken against persons who commit violence against women, and that it should be made easier for women to bring court action against offenders.

414. The Committee recommends that the Government address the matter of whether it intends to legalize prostitution and whether this issue has been subject to public debate in its next report. It strongly recommends that new legislation should not discriminate against prostitutes but should punish pimps and procurers.

415. The Committee recommends that the legal penalties for rape be amended and that the State ensure their implementation. It also recommends rape awareness campaigns be conducted for non-governmental organizations and legislators.

416. The Committee suggests that action be taken against employers who discriminate against women on grounds of pregnancy. The women concerned should be supported, and society sent a clear signal that such discrimination is not to be tolerated.

417. The Committee requests information in the Government's next report on the avenues of appeal open to women who, upon a division of property in divorce, suffer economically despite their contribution to the family's assets.

418. The Committee requests information in the Government's next report on women who migrate abroad, where they go and whether any authorized agency regulates such migration.

419. The Committee requests that the next report provide comparative data on men's and women's access to pensions and the minimum amount of such pensions.

420. The Committee requests information in the next report on whether homosexuality is penalized in the criminal code.

421. The Committee requests information on women heads of rural enterprises and on programmes for the economic advancement of rural women.

422. The Committee recommends the introduction of education programmes on the provisions of the Convention and the rights of women for judicial personnel, law enforcement officers, lawyers and others who are responsible for applying the law. The Committee also recommends that further steps be taken to increase the numbers of women at all levels of the judiciary and law enforcement agencies.

423. The Committee proposes that a campaign be conducted to educate women about the content of the Convention, alerting them to their economic, political, civil and cultural rights.

424. The Committee welcomes the systematic inclusion of statistics in future reports in order to facilitate a dialogue with the Committee on women's de facto situation. In particular, the Committee requests data on the implementation of the information system that is beginning to be applied.

425. The Committee recommends that the Government of Mexico pay special attention to safeguarding the human rights of women, including indigenous women and women in conflict zones, especially where police and armed forces are operating.

426. The Committee recommends that all states of Mexico should review their legislation so that, where necessary, women are granted access to rapid and easy abortion.

427. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Mexico of the present concluding comments, in order to make the people of Mexico, and particularly its government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard. The Committee also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

Chapter V

Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

428. The Committee considered ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (agenda item 6) at its 360th and 383rd meetings, on 19 January and 6 February 1998.

429. The item was introduced by the Chief of the Women's Rights Unit of the Division for the Advancement of Women, who introduced the report of the Secretariat (CEDAW/C/1998/I/4) and a working paper containing draft rules of procedure (CEDAW/C/1997/WG.I/WP.1).

Action taken by the Committee on the report of Working Group I

430. At its 383rd meeting, on 6 February 1998, the Committee considered the item on the basis of the report of Working Group I (CEDAW/C/1998/WG.I/WP.1).

1. Specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies

431. The Committee decided that its Chairperson should send letters to the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system seeking support for the work of the Committee and identifying members of the Committee who were serving as focal points for the particular agency or organization. The letter would also outline the information the Committee required from those organizations and would request that each nominate an individual member to serve as the focal point for the Committee.

432. The Committee decided to nominate a focal point from among its members to liaise with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

433. The Committee agreed that the pre-session working group should make it its usual practice to invite the specialized agencies to present to the Group country-specific information concerning periodic reports. The specialized agencies and other entities would be informed well in advance of this practice, as would the countries to be considered by the pre-session working group. The Committee also agreed that the specialized agencies and other entities should also be invited to address the Committee as a whole in a closed meeting on States parties whose initial reports are to be taken up by the Committee.

2. Institutional relations

434. The Committee agreed that further steps should be taken to establish cooperation between the Committee and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences. Reports to be considered by the Committee should be sent to her for comments on violence against women. Although the Committee considered that a model of flexible cooperation should be created between the Committee and the Special Rapporteur, it considered that it might be useful to nominate a focal point from among its members to develop a closer relationship with the Special Rapporteur. The Committee also agreed that the Special Rapporteur should be requested to alert the Committee to questions it might raise with individual States parties whose reports were before the Committee.

435. The Committee agreed that liaison should be established with the Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief, and those of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on traditional practices affecting the health of women and children, and systematic rape and sexual slavery and forced pregnancy in the conduct of armed conflict.

3. Pre-session working group

436. The Committee agreed to continue its current practice of assigning three members to prepare questions relating to periodic reports to guide the pre-session working group as it draws up the list of questions and issues. The three members should be drawn from different regions. The Committee agreed that the country rapporteur should take the lead in drawing up the list of questions and issues and that her introductory report should be sent to the pre-session working group to assist it in its work. The Committee agreed that country rapporteurs should be nominated at the session prior to that at which reports are to be considered.

437. The Committee agreed that the pre-session working group of the Committee should meet at the end of the previous session to encourage flexibility in the work of the Committee and to allow States parties to present more detailed and comprehensive answers to the Committee's questions. Transition to this pattern of work should take place at the twentieth session of the Committee, in January 1999 (see chap. I, sect. B, suggestion 18/1).

438. The Committee agreed that its Chairperson would invite the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to present to the Committee an analysis of the impact of their policies on women's enjoyment of their rights.

4. Consideration of the reports of States parties

439. The Committee agreed that in considering the reports of States parties the Chairperson should be entrusted with the task of expressing courtesies towards the representatives of reporting States on behalf of all members of the Committee. In the interests of time, other members of the Committee would refrain from further expressions of welcome or appreciation. The Committee also agreed that members should endeavour not to repeat questions that had already been posed by other members.

440. The Committee agreed that the Human Rights Committee's "Guidelines for the exercise of functions by members of the Committee" be circulated among members

of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for their information and comments, with a view to possible consideration at its nineteenth session.

441. The Committee reaffirmed its past practice that members should refrain from participating in any aspect of the consideration of the reports of the States of which they were nationals in order to maintain the highest standards of impartiality, both in substance and appearance (see chap. I, sect. A, decision 18/III).

5. Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

442. The Committee welcomed the suggestion made at the "Round table of Human Rights Treaty bodies' Approaches to Women's Health, with a Focus on Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights", held at Glen Cove, New York, in December 1996, that the eighth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies should consider the issue of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. It also noted the suggestion of the chairpersons that each treaty body should address the issue of HIV/AIDS in its work. The Committee had been addressing this issue for a long time and would continue to do so in its constructive dialogue with States parties when reviewing reports, its concluding comments and general recommendations. The Committee recognized the effective contribution of the Glen Cove meeting to the work of the human rights treaty bodies and encouraged the convening of similar meetings to explore thematic issues relating to women's enjoyment of rights.

6. Cooperation with the Committee on the Rights of the Child

443. Noting the successful joint meeting between the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, held at Cairo in 1996, and the recent round table on the two committees held by the United Nations Children's Fund, the Division for the Advancement of Women and International Women's Rights Action Watch, the Committee suggested that steps should be taken to strengthen further the cooperation between the two Committees.

7. Suggestions of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

444. The Committee expressed its satisfaction at the growing interconnections between United Nations bodies, including between the Committee of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the increasing interest within those bodies with regard to the human rights of women. It noted the Subcommission's recommendations with regard to contemporary forms of slavery, which the Committee addresses throughout its work, and its suggestion that this issue should be specifically addressed in its reporting guidelines. The Committee also took note of the suggestions of the Subcommission in regard to women's right to adequate housing and to land and property and agreed to consider the proposals in the context of its long-term programme of work regarding general recommendations.

8. Suggestions of the expert group meetings convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women

445. The Committee expressed its satisfaction that the Convention and the work of the Committee had been referred to in three of the expert group meetings convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women during 1997. It also noted that throughout its work the Committee already considered the extent to which adolescent girls enjoyed their human rights, including their rights to reproductive and sexual health. It noted the suggestions made by the expert group meetings with regard to future general recommendations and agreed to take into account the suggestions that general recommendations should be formulated on refugee and displaced women and on gender-based persecution in armed conflict as it formulated its long-term programme of work with regard to general recommendations.

446. The Committee welcomed the suggestion made by the Expert Group Meeting on Women's Enjoyment of Economic and Social Rights that the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should consider issuing a joint statement on the indivisibility of civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights and the centrality of gender awareness of their rights as part of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Committee suggested that the proposal should be brought to the attention of the chairpersons' meeting in February.

9. Reports to be considered at the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first sessions

447. Bearing in mind the criteria of date of submission, geographical balance and reports delayed from earlier sessions, the following reports should be considered:

Nineteenth session

Initial reports

Jordan
Slovakia
South Africa

Second periodic reports

Greece (second and third)
Nigeria (second and third)
Panama (second and third)
United Republic of Tanzania (second and third)

Third periodic reports

New Zealand (third and fourth)
Republic of Korea (third and fourth)

Fourth periodic reports

Peru (third and fourth)

In the event that one of the above-mentioned States parties should be unable to present its report, the Committee will consider the third periodic reports of Belarus or Spain.

Twentieth session

Initial reports

Algeria
Belize (initial and second)
Liechtenstein

Second periodic reports

Chile
Thailand (second and third)

Third periodic reports

Austria (third and fourth)
China (third and fourth)
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Fourth periodic reports

Colombia

In the event that one of the above-mentioned States parties should be unable to present its report, the Committee will consider the third periodic reports of Belarus or Spain.

Twenty-first session

Initial reports

Second periodic reports

Ireland (second and third)

Third periodic reports

Egypt
Finland
Germany (second and third)

Fourth periodic reports

Sweden

In the event that one of the above-mentioned States Parties should be unable to present its report, the Committee will consider the fourth periodic report of Denmark.

10. Members of the pre-session working group for the nineteenth session

448. The Committee decided that the members of the pre-session working group for the nineteenth session and their alternates should be:

Member
Ms. Kongit Sinegiorgis (Africa)
Ms. Yung-Chung Kim (Asia)
Ms. Carlota Bustelo (Europe)
Ms. Miriam Estrada (Latin America)

Alternate
Ms. Ahoua Ouedraogo (Africa)
Ms. Lin Shangzen (Asia)
Ms. Ivanka Corti (Europe)
Ms. Aída González (Latin America)

11. United Nations meetings to be attended by the Chairperson or members of the Committee in 1998

449. The Committee recommended that the Chairperson or an alternate should attend the following meetings:

(a) The ninth (extraordinary) meeting of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies to be held from 25 to 27 February 1998;

(b) Commission on the Status of Women;

(c) Commission on Human Rights;

(d) Meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies;

(e) General Assembly (Third Committee).

12. Dates of the nineteenth session of the Committee

450. Consistent with the calendar of conferences for 1997, the nineteenth session should be held from 22 June to 10 July 1998, in New York. The pre-session working group would meet from 15 to 19 June 1998.

Chapter VI
Implementation of article 21 of the Convention

451. The Committee considered the implementation of article 21 of the Convention (agenda item 5) at its 360th and 383rd meetings, on 19 January and 6 February 1998.

452. The item was introduced by the Deputy Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, who presented the following documents:

(a) Draft general recommendation on article 12 of the Convention prepared by a member of the Committee (CEDAW/C/1998/I/WG.II/WP.1);

(b) Working paper containing a draft of the contribution of the Committee to the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights concerning reservations to the Convention prepared by a member of the Committee (CEDAW/C/1998/WG.II/WP.2);

(c) Note by the Secretary-General on reports of the specialized agencies on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities (CEDAW/C/1998/I/3).

A. Action taken by the Committee on the report of Working Group II

453. At its 383rd meeting, on 6 February 1998, the Committee took the following decisions on the basis of the report of Working Group II (CEDAW/1998/WG.II/3 and Adds.1 and 2; CEDAW/C/1998/I/WG.II/WP.4) and took the following action.

1. Draft general recommendation on article 12

454. The Committee agreed to continue work on a draft general recommendation on women's health. Members of the Committee would submit written comments on the current draft, which would be revised by two members of the Committee, in conjunction with the Secretariat, and submitted to the Committee at its nineteenth session.

2. Draft working paper on reservations

455. The Committee agreed that a draft working paper on reservations to the Convention would be circulated to members of the Committee for comments. The draft would be revised by a member of the Committee and submitted to the Committee at its nineteenth session.

B. Statements by senior United Nations officials

Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund

456. At its 376th meeting, on 30 January 1998, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund addressed the Committee, indicating that women's health, including sexual and reproductive health, is finally acknowledged to be a human right. She noted that women's health depends not only on appropriate health care, but also on social conditions related to women's status. Countries, thus, needed to address discrimination based on gender to guarantee women's right to health.

457. She noted that by drawing out the implications of human rights instruments, including the Convention, the United Nations world conferences had contributed to the identification of sexual and reproductive health concerns as issues of human rights and inspired countries to broaden their approach to reproductive health care. She indicated that the United Nations Population Fund is now seeking to address its programme activities in the framework of human rights and that training of staff, as well as support to non-governmental organization advocacy activities in the field of reproductive rights, had been initiated.

458. Emphasizing the importance of integrating the conclusions of the United Nations world conferences into the human rights monitoring process, she underlined the importance of the 1996 Glen Cove Round table of Human Rights Treaty bodies' Approaches to Women's Health. She noted that an informal inter-agency working group of gender human rights focal points has been meeting to follow up the recommendations of this round table and that a proposal on advocacy, research and training activities has been put forward.

459. She appreciated the pre-session working group's initiative which had provided the United Nations Population Fund with an opportunity to discuss issues relating to women's health in States parties which were before the Committee and she indicated that the Fund was ready to assist other treaty bodies in their monitoring of reproductive rights. She indicated that the Population Fund and the

Committee have discussed the participation of Committee experts in the formulation, mid-term review and evaluation of the country programmes of the Fund and in regional meetings and field-staff training.

460. Concluding that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has an essential role in monitoring government fulfilment of obligations with regard to women's health, she suggested that a fitting commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would be the strengthening of the role of the United Nations system and human rights treaties to enable women to realize their human rights, including those relating to reproductive and sexual rights.

Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women

461. At its 381st meeting on 4 February 1998, the Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women addressed the Committee. Emphasizing the central importance of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the United Nations human rights system and the importance of placing women's human rights at the forefront of the development agenda, she noted that support for the ratification and implementation of the Convention is central to the advancement of the rights of women.

462. She noted that the United Nations Development Fund for Women is in a unique position within the United Nations system to promote ratification and implementation of the Convention because its regional programme advisers are frequently called upon to act as brokers and facilitators between women's organizations, national Governments and other parts of the United Nations system and pledged the full and active support of the Fund in this regard.

463. Recognizing that the transformation of social values and creating a culture of respect for the human rights of women is a lengthy process, and that implementation of these rights must take place at national level, she described several country-based initiatives of the Development Fund concerning the Convention. She also described the joint United Nations Development Fund for Women/International Human Rights Action Watch (Asia/Pacific) training initiative, "From global to local: a convention implementation and monitoring workshop", now in its second year, which seeks to strengthen understanding of women's rights at the national level, as well as to raise awareness of the importance of the Committee's work amongst women's non-governmental organizations, and to increase their participation in Convention monitoring and implementation. She noted that 25 women from 13 countries that are reporting to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its eighteenth and nineteenth sessions had participated in the 1998 workshop and pledged that the Fund would ensure that it took place annually.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

464. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights addressed the Committee at its 382nd meeting on 4 February 1998. She noted that the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights, the integration of human rights into the mainstream of United Nations system-wide action and the full participation of women as both agents and development of development were among the priority objectives of the World Conference on Human Rights. The Secretary-General had also emphasized the importance of human rights in the work of the United Nations system as a whole.

465. She indicated that the human rights of women will be a highlight of commemorative activities for the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and commended the Committee for its willingness to contribute to these activities through its work on reservations. Noting that the commemoration and the five-year implementation review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights provide opportunities to assess progress achieved with respect to the human rights of women, she acknowledged that women continue to face serious inequalities in law and practice in all spheres of activity, in all societies.

466. She stressed that one of her priorities as United Nations High Commissioner would be the struggle against gender discrimination, which would incorporate several initiatives, including a ratification campaign concerning the Convention and programmes to strengthen partnerships between national and international women's and human rights non-governmental organizations. She drew attention to the increasing cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women and the growing recognition of the human rights of women in the work of her office. She emphasized her strong personal commitment to the promotion and protection of the human rights of women and her intention to work closely with the Committee to create a more effective system for implementing its recommendations and those of other treaty bodies.

467. The Committee welcomed Mrs. Robinson's comprehensive statement and expressed sincere gratitude to her for stressing the importance of the Committee's work.

468. It noted that the High Commissioner had expressed strong support for the Secretary-General's programme for reform, in which he pledged that strengthening substantive and technical support to human rights legislative bodies, treaty bodies and special procedures would be given the highest priority and that efforts to establish common data banks of information and to carry out research and analysis aimed at assisting those bodies would be accelerated.

469. The Committee welcomed the High Commissioner's commitment to redouble her efforts to make human rights a reality for everyone; to prevent human rights abuses and violations; to build a global partnership for human rights; and to ensure that the promotion and observance of human rights, along with peace, democracy and sustainable development, shall serve as guiding principles of the twenty-first century, and that the human rights of women will be one of the major highlights of the commemorative activities for the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

470. The High Commissioner's initiative to campaign for the universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to encourage the removal of substantive reservations, was noted with appreciation. Her support for the development of an optional protocol to the Convention and her announcement that the Office of the High Commissioner will make available a substantive officer to assist the Working Group of the Commission on the Status of Women with its elaboration of an optional protocol was also welcomed.

471. Members noted with appreciation and accepted the proposal of the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies, endorsed by the High Commissioner, that in order to enhance relationships with other human rights mechanisms, the Committee should meet occasionally at Geneva. In order to implement this proposal, the Committee requested the Division for the Advancement of Women, in consultation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to study this issue and brief in this regard the Committee at its nineteenth session.

472. Members also invited the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as part of her initiative to emphasize the importance of women's human rights in the context of the Convention, to consider including:

(a) A comprehensive public information programme in all regions, particularly in those countries which have problems implementing the Convention fully, and in complying with article 18 of the Convention;

(b) A training programme for gender sensitization of those who must understand and implement the Convention, including police, teachers, the judiciary and health professionals.

C. Presentation by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief

473. The Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief addressed the Committee at its 374th meeting on 28 January 1998.

474. He indicated that he was frequently faced with issues concerning the status of women and their position regarding religion. He noted that religious norms relating to women were dynamic and could not be put forward as a justification for discrimination or reservations to the Convention or other treaties.

475. He stressed the role of education in the elimination of discrimination, citing the responsibility of schools and other institutions in this regard. He said that while international legal principles relating to women's advancement were well developed, these principles still needed to be acted on.

476. In their comments on his presentation, experts thanked the Special Rapporteur and noted that it was seeking to strengthen cooperation and coordination among all United Nations mechanisms to promote the rights of women. Several experts stated that violence against women was often linked to religious extremism, which was also sometimes invoked as an excuse for discrimination. Several experts emphasized the connection between the Committee's work and that of the Special Rapporteur and looked forward to further cooperation. Experts also expressed the view that greater religious tolerance and respect for all human rights would create the environment for implementation of the Convention and equality between women and men.

Chapter VII
Provisional agenda for the nineteenth session

477. The Committee considered the provisional agenda for its nineteenth session (agenda item 7) at its 383rd meeting on 6 February 1998. The Committee decided to approve the following provisional agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the Committee.
4. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
5. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.
7. Provisional agenda for the twentieth session.
8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its nineteenth session.

Chapter VIII
Adoption of the report

478. At its 383rd meeting, on 6 February 1998, the Committee adopted the report on its eighteenth session (CEDAW/C/1998/I/L.1 and Add.1-9), as orally amended.

Part Two

Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its nineteenth session

Letter of transmittal

10 July 1998

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, according to which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, established pursuant to the Convention, "shall, through the Economic and Social Council, report annually to the General Assembly of the United Nations on its activities".

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held its nineteenth session from 22 June to 10 July 1998 at United Nations Headquarters. It adopted its report on the session at its 403rd meeting, on 10 July. The report of the Committee is herewith submitted to you for transmission to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) Salma **Khan**
Chairperson
Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women

Chapter I
Matters brought to the attention of States parties

A. Statements on reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

1. The Committee adopted the following statement on reservations to the Convention which it wishes to bring to the attention of States parties as its contribution to the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Introduction

2. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women wishes to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action with a statement concerning the adverse impact that reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women have on the achievement by women of full and substantive equality with men. The Committee has extensive experience of the impact of reservations gained from the examination of States parties' reports. It has also noted the increasing concern expressed by other human rights treaty bodies, the International Law Commission, some Member States, the World Conference on Human Rights and the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as scholars and non-governmental organizations, at the number and extent of reservations to human rights treaties, and to this Convention in particular.

Background

3. The Committee has, on a number of occasions, expressed its views and concerns regarding the number and extent of reservations to the Convention.[1] It has also noted that some States parties that enter reservations to the Convention do not enter reservations to analogous provisions in other human rights treaties. A number of States enter reservations to particular articles on the ground that national law, tradition, religion or culture is not congruent with Convention principles, and purport to justify the reservation on that basis. Some States enter a reservation to article 2, although their national constitutions or laws prohibit discrimination. There is therefore an inherent conflict between the provisions of the State's constitution and its reservation to the Convention. Some reservations are drawn so widely that their effect cannot be limited to specific provisions in the Convention.

4. Several States parties have entered interpretative declarations to the Convention on ratification or accession. While it is not always easy to distinguish a declaration from a reservation, any statement, irrespective of its title, which seeks to modify the legal effect of the Convention in respect of a State party, will be considered by the Committee to be a reservation.[2] The Committee has noted, in this regard, that a number of States parties have entered general declarations which constitute, in fact, general reservations.

Reservations to the Convention

5. As at 1 July 1998, 161 States parties had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Fifty-four States had entered reservations to one or more articles in the Convention including permissible reservations to article 29 (1) and (2).

6. Articles 2 and 16 are considered by the Committee to be core provisions of the Convention. Although some States parties have withdrawn reservations to those articles, the Committee is particularly concerned at the number and extent of reservations entered to those articles.

Impermissible reservations

7. Article 28, paragraph 2, of the Convention adopts the impermissibility principle contained in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. It states that a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the present Convention shall not be permitted.

8. Although the Convention does not prohibit the entering of reservations, those which challenge the central principles of the Convention are contrary to the provisions of the Convention and to general international law. As such they may be challenged by other States parties.

9. States parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation, if not yet incorporated therein, and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

10. Reservations affect the efficacy of the Convention, whose objective is to end discrimination against women and to achieve *de jure* and de facto equality for them. Reservations prevent the Committee from assessing the progress of States parties' implementation of the Convention, limit its mandate and potentially affect the entire human rights regime. Some States are concerned about a perceived conflict between article 2 and the Islamic shariah law. In other instances, States have entered reservations, which, although unspecific, are broad enough to encompass article 2. These reservations pose an acute problem for the implementation of the Convention and for the Committee's ability to monitor compliance with it. Several have entered reservations to article 2 to protect rights of succession to the throne and to chiefly and other traditional titles. This too is discriminatory against women.

11. In general recommendation 20, the Committee, *inter alia*, sought to resolve the problem of impermissible reservations. And, in June 1993, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action encouraged States to consider limiting the extent of any reservations they lodged to international human rights instruments, to formulate any reservations as precisely and narrowly as possible, to ensure that none is incompatible with the object and purpose of the relevant treaty and to regularly review any reservations with a view to withdrawing them. In spite of these recommendations, to date few reservations to article 2 have been modified or withdrawn by any State party.

Article 16

12. The Committee has previously analysed article 16 in its general recommendation 21. In the course of the analysis of factors impeding compliance with article 16, it said:

> "*Reservations*
>
> "The Committee has noted with alarm the number of States parties which have entered reservations to the whole or part of article 16, especially when a reservation has also been entered to article 2, claiming that compliance may conflict with a commonly held vision of the family, based, *inter alia*, on cultural or religious beliefs or on a country's economic or political status.
>
> "Many of these countries hold a patriarchal belief in the structure of a family which places a father, husband or son in a favourable position. In some countries where fundamentalist or other extremist views or economic hardship have encouraged a return to old values and traditions, women's place in the family has deteriorated sharply. In others, where it has been recognized that a modern society depends for its economic advance and for the general good of the community on involving all adults equally, regardless of gender, these taboos and reactionary or extremist ideas have progressively been discouraged.
>
> "Consistent with articles 2, 3 and 24 in particular, the Committee requires that all States parties gradually progress to a stage where, by their resolute discouragement of notions of the inequality of women in the home, each country will withdraw its reservation, in particular to articles 9, 15 and 16 of the Convention.
>
> "States parties should resolutely discourage any notions of inequality of women and men which are affirmed by laws or by private law or custom, and progress to the stage where reservations, in particular to article 16, will be withdrawn."[3]

13. The Committee again emphasizes these recommendations and encourages States parties to note, adopt and implement them.

Impact of reservations

14. Reservations to any human rights treaty limit the application of internationally accepted human rights norms at the national level. They will also indicate clearly the degree of commitment of the reserving State to full compliance with the particular treaty.

15. When reservations are made to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, there can be a double impact. By entering a reservation, the State indicates its unwillingness to comply with an accepted human rights norm. It also ensures that women's inequality with men will be entrenched at the national level. The promise given to its women when the State ratifies the Convention is not therefore fulfilled. This not only affects women's ability to exercise and enjoy their rights, but also guarantees that they will remain inferior to men and have less access to the full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights enjoyed by men. The ramifications for women are significant. They must compete with men on an unequal footing for such fundamental rights as equality of income, access to education, housing and health care, and equality of rights and responsibilities within the family. Reservations to articles 2 and 16 perpetuate the myth of women's inferiority and reinforce the inequalities in the lives of millions of women throughout the world. They continue to be treated in both public and private life as inferior to men, and to suffer greater violations of their rights in every sphere of their lives.

16. The Committee holds the view that article 2 is central to the objects and purpose of the Convention. States parties which ratify the Convention do so because they agree that discrimination against women in all its forms should be condemned and that the strategies set out in article 2, subparagraphs (a) to (g), should be implemented by States parties to eliminate it.

17. Neither traditional, religious or cultural practice nor incompatible domestic laws and policies can justify violations of the Convention. The Committee also remains convinced that reservations to article 16, whether lodged for national, traditional, religious or cultural reasons, are incompatible with the Convention and therefore impermissible and should be reviewed and modified or withdrawn.

Removing reservations

18. The Committee considers that those States parties which have entered reservations to the Convention have certain options open to them. According to the Special Rapporteur appointed by the International Law Commission to report on the law and practice relating to reservations to treaties a State party may:

(a) After having examined the finding in good faith, maintain its reservation;

(b) Withdraw its reservation;

(c) "Regularize" its situation by replacing its impermissible reservation with a permissible reservation;

(d) Renounce being a party to the Treaty.

19. The Committee has already noted that to date, few reservations to article 2 have been withdrawn or modified by any State party and that reservations to article 16 are rarely withdrawn.

20. While article 29 provides an inter-State dispute procedure, a number of States have entered reservations to article 29 itself, thereby limiting its effect. Some States formally lodge objections to reservations to articles 2 or 16. The Committee recognizes and appreciates the positive impact that the use of this procedure can have in encouraging States to withdraw or modify reservations and the empowering effect these objections have for women in the State party. It is optimistic that more States parties will rigorously review and object to impermissible reservations to the Convention.

21. The Committee also acknowledges the view of the Special Rapporteur appointed by the International Law Commission that objections by States are not only a means of exerting pressure on reserving States, but also serve as a useful guide for the assessment of the permissibility of a reservation by the Committee itself.

The role of the Committee

22. The Committee has an important role to play, one which has been mandated by the Vienna Declaration and Programme for Action, which, in paragraph 39, states that the Committee should continue its review of reservations.

23. The Committee concludes that it has certain responsibilities as the body of experts charged with the consideration of periodic reports submitted to it. The Committee, in its examination of States' reports, enters into constructive dialogue with the State party and makes concluding comments routinely expressing concern at the entry of reservations to articles 2 and 16 or the failure of States parties to withdraw or modify them.

24. The Special Rapporteur considers that control of the permissibility of reservations is the primary responsibility of the States parties. However, the Committee again wishes

to draw to the attention of States parties its grave concern at the number and extent of impermissible reservations. It also expresses concern that, even when States object to such reservations there appears to be a reluctance on the part of the States concerned to remove and modify them and thereby comply with general principles of international law.

Conclusion

25. Fifty years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the great majority of Member States have signified their commitment to the Convention by ratification or accession. It is now time to re-examine States' self-imposed limitations to full compliance with all the principles in the Convention by the entry of reservations. Removal or modification of reservations, particularly to articles 2 and 16, would indicate a State party's determination to remove all barriers to women's full equality and its commitment to ensuring that women are able to participate fully in all aspects of public and private life without fear of discrimination or recrimination. States which remove reservations would be making a major contribution to achieving the objectives of both formal and de facto or substantive compliance with the Convention – a laudable and appropriate contribution to the commemoration of 50 years of compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as implementation of the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

Notes

[1] General recommendations 4, 20 and 21.

[2] Article 2, subpara. 1 (d), Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 1969.

[3] General recommendation No. 21 (thirteenth session, 1994), *Equality in marriage and family relations*, paras. 41-44.

B. Decisions

Decision 19/I. Timing of pre-session working group

The Committee, at its eighteenth session, decided to effect a transition to a pattern of work in which the pre-session working group meets at the session prior to which the reports before that pre-session will be considered. The Committee therefore decided that, in order for the transition to this new pattern of work to be effected smoothly, the pre-session working group for the twenty-first session would meet as a third working group during the twentieth session and would remain, if necessary, for up to three days after the twentieth session to consolidate the lists of issues and questions with respect to the reports to be considered at the twenty-first session.

Decision 19/II. Concluding comments

The Committee decided to revise its procedures and format for the elaboration of concluding comments with a view to streamlining the comments, while retaining flexibility (see paras. 395 to 397).

Decision 19/III. List of issues and questions for consideration of periodic reports

The Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare drafts, lists of issues and questions with regard to periodic reports, based on an analytical comparison of current States parties' reports, with previous reports and the Committee's discussion thereon and other relevant information, including concluding observations of other treaty bodies. The draft lists prepared by the Secretariat would be sent in advance of the meeting of the pre-session working group to those Committee members designated as country rapporteurs.

Chapter II

Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

26. On 10 July 1998, the closing date of the nineteenth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, there were 161 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York in March 1980. In accordance with article 27, the Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981.

27. A list of States parties to the Convention is contained in annex I to the present report.

B. Opening of the session

28. The Committee held its nineteenth session at United Nations Headquarters from 22 June to 10 July 1998. The Committee held 20 plenary meetings (384th to 403rd), and its two working groups held 4 meetings.

29. The session was opened by the Chairperson of the Committee, Ms. Salma Khan (Bangladesh), who had been elected at the sixteenth session of the Committee in January 1997.

30. In her opening statement, Ms. Angela E. V. King, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, welcomed two experts, Ms. Antonia Guvava (Zimbabwe) and Ms. Chikako Taya (Japan), who were, respectively, serving the remainder of the terms of Ms. Tendai Bare (Zimbabwe) and Ms. Ginko Sato (Japan), members who had resigned from the Committee. She also congratulated the four members who had been re-elected for a further four-year term at the tenth meeting of States parties on 17 February 1998. She expressed gratitude to those members leaving the Committee, noting that, because of their commitment and expertise, she was sure that they would continue to support and disseminate the ideals of the Convention.

31. The Special Adviser informed the Committee that in relation to the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held from 2 to 13 March 1998, reviewed critical areas of concern of the

Beijing Platform for Action that relate to the theme of human rights, i.e., violence against women, human rights of women, women and armed conflict and the girl child. The Commission on the Status of Women urged Governments to ratify and accede to the Convention in order to achieve one of the Platform for Action's objectives, that of universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the year 2000, and also addressed the issue of reservations to the Convention, a question that the Committee will take up as it completes its statement for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She noted that the open-ended working group of the Commission established to draft the optional protocol to the Convention had met in parallel to the Commission and had moved forward in drafting the text of the protocol. The working group would meet again in 1999 during the forty-third session of the Commission to continue its work.

32. The Special Adviser noted that the year 2000 would mark five years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. In order to mark this important anniversary, the Commission on the Status of Women had called for a high-level plenary review by the General Assembly to appraise progress achieved in implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Beijing Platform for Action. The General Assembly had approved the convening of a special session to be held from 5 to 9 June 2000. The preparatory work for the session would be carried out by the Commission at its forty-third and forty-fourth sessions in 1999 and 2000, both of which would be extended by one week. In that connection, the Commission had invited the Committee to provide it with information, at its forty-third session, on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action through its review of States parties' reports.

33. Ms. King concluded by noting that within the United Nations system there was evidence of increasing commitment to gender mainstreaming and recognition of the human rights of women. However, despite progress, there was a need to guard against complacency. For example, she said, there had been no additional ratifications or accessions to the Convention since the Committee's last session. As the Committee approached the twentieth anniversary of the Convention in 1999, better and more innovative methods were needed to encourage ratification and to bridge the gap between ratification and implementation. In addition, a significant number of States parties' reports were long overdue, including initial reports. Strategies to encourage reporting should be designed and implemented.

C. Attendance

34. Twenty-one members of the Committee attended the session; several attended only part of the session. Ms. Ivanka Corti attended from 22 to 26 June and from 6 to 10 July 1998, Ms. Javate de Dios on 22 and 23 June and from 1 to 10 July, Ms. Schöpp-Schilling from 26 June to 10 July, Ms. Carlota Bustelo from 29 June to 10 July, Ms. Sunaryati Hartono from 29 June to 10 July and Ms. Carmel Shalev from 29 June to 10 July.

35. A list of the members of the Committee, together with their terms of office, is contained in annex II to the present report.

D. Solemn declaration

36. At the opening of the nineteenth session, before assuming their functions, the replacement members, Ms. Antonia Guvava (Zimbabwe) and Ms. Chikako Taya (Japan), made the solemn declaration as provided for under rule 10 of the rules of procedure of the Committee.

E. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

37. The Committee adopted its provisional agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/1998/II/1) at its 384th meeting, on 22 June 1998, as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Solemn declaration by the new members of the Committee.
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
4. Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the Committee.
5. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
7. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.

8. Provisional agenda for the twentieth session.

9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its nineteenth session.

F. Report of the pre-session working group

38. The Committee had decided, at its ninth session, to convene a pre-session working group for five days before each session to prepare lists of issues and questions relating to periodic reports that would be considered by the Committee at the session.

39. The following three members, representing different regional groups, participated in the working group at the nineteenth session: Aida González-Martínez (Latin America and the Caribbean), Yung-Chung Kim (Asia and the Pacific), and Ahoua Ouedraogo (Africa), Chairperson of the pre-session working group. The Chairperson of the Committee, Ms. Salma Khan, also served as a member of the pre-session working group.

40. The pre-session working group prepared lists of issues and questions relating to the subsequent reports of six States parties, namely, New Zealand, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, the Republic of Korea and the United Republic of Tanzania.

41. At the 392nd meeting, on 30 June 1998, the Chairperson of the pre-session working group, Ms. Ahoua Ouedraogo, introduced the report of the working group (CEDAW/C/1998/II/CRP.1/Add.1-6). The pre-session working group noted that the majority of reports reviewed followed the guidelines of the Committee and described the major social, economic and political changes that had occurred since the States parties last reported to the Committee. States parties had made efforts to respect and implement the Convention through the passage of legislation and other measures. Most of the reports under review indicated that Governments and non-governmental organizations were cooperating with respect to the Convention, and a greater awareness of the Convention and its principles had been achieved; however there remained a lack of reliable statistical data relating to several areas of the Convention.

42. In accordance with the decision of the Committee at its eighteenth session, the pre-session working group received country-specific information on the States parties that were before the working group from representatives of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations. Also in accordance with the Committee's decision at the eighteenth session, the pre-session working group received country-specific information on those States parties from representatives of national and international non-governmental organizations.

43. The pre-session working group encouraged States parties to take advantage of available United Nations support to countries seeking to develop statistical databases. It noted that the reports suggested that women continued to be subject to persistent discrimination and difficulties in the context of education, employment, health and nationality, although some gains had been made where women's representation in decision-making positions was concerned.

44. The pre-session working group also noted the persistence of cultural and customary norms in some States parties that sometimes impeded the implementation of the Convention and that could also pose obstacles to the introduction of measures designed to advance the status of women. It also noted the persistence of violence against women and sexual exploitation in all the countries under review. This constituted a serious obstacle to the implementation of the Convention and remained a serious issue despite clear governmental efforts to address violence and sexual exploitation and stereotypical notions of the roles of men and women and cultural patterns of behaviour.

G. Composition and organization of work of the working groups

45. At its 384th meeting, on 22 June, the Committee agreed on the composition of its two standing working groups: working group I, on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee, and working group II, on ways and means of implementing article 21 of the Convention.

46. Working group I was composed of Ayse Feride Acar, Emna Aouij, Desirée P. Bernard, Silvia Cartwright, Ivanka Corti, Yolanda Ferrer Gómez, Aída González-Martínez, Antonia Guvava, Salma Khan, Yung-Chung Kim, Ahoua Ouedraogo, Anne Lise Ryel, Lin Shangzhen and Chikako Taya.

47. Working group II was composed of Charlotte Abaka, Ayse Feride Acar, Emma Aouij, Silvia Cartwright, Ivanka Corti, Aurora Javate de Dios, Yolanda Ferrer Gómez, Aída González-Martínez, Ahoua Ouedraogo, Anne Lise Ryel and Lin Shangzhen.

48. The specific issues addressed by working groups I and II were the following:

(a) Working group I: Practices of the Committee with respect to the concluding comments; timing and working methods of the pre-session working group; the Committee's relationship with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences; the guidelines of the Human Rights Committee for the exercise of functions by members; and issues raised at the ninth meeting of the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies.

(b) Working group II: Statement on reservations; draft general recommendation on health; joint statement on indivisibility and gender in enjoyment of human rights; recommendations to the Committee from the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights.

Chapter III

Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the Committee

49. The Chairperson of the Committee, Ms. Salma Khan, reported on her activities between the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions.

50. She informed the Committee that from 23 to 27 February 1998 she had attended the ninth meeting of persons chairing the United Nations human rights treaty bodies. Participants underlined the importance of universal ratification of the six core human rights treaties. They suggested that a letter be sent by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights requesting the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop a comprehensive programme to facilitate ratification and reporting by States parties. Referring to the success of the Plan of Action for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the meeting recommended that an overall plan of action be drawn up to enhance the resources available to the treaty bodies. Various recommendations were made with regard to the concluding comments of treaty bodies and approaches to be taken in the context of long-overdue reports.

51. Ms. Khan reported on her participation at the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women and also informed the Committee that she had addressed the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights, informing it of the Committee's achievements, including the adoption of general recommendation 23 on women and public life, and progress in respect of a general recommendation on health.

52. Ms. Khan informed the Committee that, in her personal capacity, she had made a statement at a non-governmental meeting on women and fundamentalism, held from 16 to 18 April 1998 in Barcelona, Spain. Again, in her personal capacity, she had attended the organizational session of the preparatory committee of the special session of the General Assembly to be held in the year 2000 on the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. The major focus of her statement at the session was the plight of people, particularly the poorest, living in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa where the goals of the Summit had been largely unmet.

53. The Chairperson informed the Committee that she had attended the annual session of the UNDP/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Board, which was held in Geneva on 8 June 1998. The Board focused on ways to enhance the capacity of countries to make the most effective use of resources allocated to population programmes. At the meeting, she had emphasized the need for a greater focus on reproductive health, particularly among adolescent girls and women.

54. She stressed the importance of linkages between the Committee and other United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and suggested that the Committee consider appointing a focal point to liaise with the Special Rapporteur. She noted that between the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions, the Committee had strengthened its relationship with the specialized agencies and other bodies, including the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. She acknowledged with appreciation the continued support of international and national non-governmental organizations, including the International Women's Action Watch and the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy, and their role in the realization of women's rights, particularly in the developing world.

55. The Chairperson concluded by congratulating the Committee on its achievements and indicated that as a result of continued teamwork, solidarity and commitment she looked forward to further progress.

Chapter IV

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

A. Introduction

56. At its nineteenth session, the Committee considered the reports submitted by eight States parties under article 18 of the Convention: two initial reports; three combined second and third periodic reports; two combined third and fourth periodic reports; one third and fourth periodic reports.

57. As decided at its thirteenth session, in 1994, the Committee prepared concluding comments on each report considered.

58. The Committee's concluding comments on the reports of States parties, as prepared respectively by the members of the Committee, and a summary of the introductory presentations by the representatives of the States parties are provided below. The summary records provide more detailed information on the Committee's consideration of the reports of the States parties.

B. Consideration of reports of States parties

1. Initial reports

Slovakia

59. The Committee considered the initial report of Slovakia (CEDAW/C/SVK/1 and CEDAW/C/SVK/1/Add.1) at its 385th, 386th and 389th meetings, on 23 and 30 June 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.385, 386 and 389).

Introduction by the State party

60. In introducing the report, the representative emphasized human rights and their importance for all individual members of society and their quality of life. She informed the Committee that one of the essential tasks of the State was to ensure the fundamental rights and freedoms of all citizens through, *inter alia*, the adherence to international treaties and the realization of the rights espoused in those instruments at the national level.

61. The representative informed the Committee that Slovakia had adopted essential guarantees of democracy, human rights and civil liberties, as well as the international agreements to which Czechoslovakia had been party. At its independence in January 1993, Slovakia succeeded to various United Nations human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

62. The representative informed the Committee that Slovakia had been actively involved in international activities relating to women's rights and equal rights for women and men. It had participated in the major United Nations world conferences, including the Fourth World Conference on Women, and had organized a world conference to evaluate the International Year of the Family in 1995.

63. Slovakia has been actively implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, including through the establishment, in March 1996, of the Coordination Committee for the Problems of Women, consisting, *inter alia*, of representatives of the Slovak Republic National Council, various ministries, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, churches and experts. In 1997, the Coordination Committee for the Problems of Women elaborated the National Action Plan for Women in Slovakia, which was then approved by the Government and submitted to the secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women. The representative also informed the Committee that Slovakia had been elected to the Commission on the Status of Women through 1999 and that its representative was currently a vice-chairperson of the Commission.

64. Based on the results of demographic and sociological research, the representative informed the Committee that matrimony and parenthood were important values in Slovak society. She indicated that, owing to their greater responsibilities, women considered their status to be less advantageous than that of men's, but that they did not perceive themselves to belong to the "weaker sex". Women derived their status and identity from their societal roles, including maternity.

65. The representative noted that equality was guaranteed in the social security system, including with respect to pensions, health insurance, State-provided social benefits and social care. The prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex and the principle of equality were explicitly expressed in the Labour Code and women workers were protected from termination of employment as a result of pregnancy or when involved in the continuous care of a child up to three years of age. Slovakia had a high employment rate for women, and the labour law was above the standard of many other advanced countries. However, women experienced inequality in employment, including with regard

to reduced hiring opportunities and unequal pay for work of equal value. Notably, new legislation, such as the amended Labour Code, the Civil Act and the State Service Act, which are currently under preparation, emphasized pay equality.

66. The representative indicated that domestic violence was a growing focus of attention, although it was likely to be hidden from public attention. Crime prevention measures played a major role in combating all forms of violence against women and a special council to act as an advisory body to the Government on this issue had been established. The council had reviewed crime prevention proposals prepared by the Ministry of Interior and other departments and regional offices, and was expected to encourage cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organizations. Also, institutional frameworks for crime prevention were broadened in 1997 through an increase in the number of police specializing in juvenile crime. Positions for crime prevention specialists were also established at all district and regional directorates of the Slovak constabulary.

67. In concluding her presentation, the representative emphasized that Slovakia had taken the preparation of its initial report to the Committee very seriously and stressed that Slovakia considered the thorough implementation of human rights treaties to be an essential condition for a modern democratic society and the rule of the law.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

68. The Committee welcomes the submission of the initial report of Slovakia. It also expresses its appreciation to the delegation for the comprehensive nature of the report, especially the addendum, and for the provision of extensive information in response to the Committee's questions on such short notice. The Committee welcomes the identification of the numerous legal provisions relevant to women's advancement in the report.

69. The Committee welcomes the high-level delegation, including the State Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic.

Positive aspects

70. The Committee is pleased to note that, according to the legal system of Slovakia, international treaties, including the Convention, have been promulgated in Parliament and take precedence over domestic legislation.

71. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the Coordination Committee for the Problems of Women and the Gender Centre. The Committee expresses its satisfaction that the national machinery provides a strong framework for the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women, essential in minimizing the structural adjustment experienced during the transition. The Committee is pleased to note that Slovakia has submitted a national plan of action in compliance with the Beijing Platform for Action.

72. The Committee expresses its satisfaction with the general standard of women's health and education in Slovakia.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

73. The Committee notes that Slovakia is undergoing a difficult transition from a centrally controlled economy to a democracy and a social market-oriented economy, albeit with consideration for social factors. The Committee observes that, in the absence of gender-sensitive policies and measures to counteract negative effects, these changes can have a negative effect on women's enjoyment of their human rights and impede the implementation of the Convention.

74. The Committee expresses its concern at the overemphasis on legislative protection of and cultural promotion of motherhood and family roles for women, rather than on women as individuals in their own right. The traditional, stereotyped view of women as mothers is thereby reinforced and negates the participation of fathers in child care. That perception reflects a misunderstanding of such critical concepts as gender roles, indirect discrimination and de facto inequality.

Principal subjects of concern and the Committee's recommendations

75. The Committee is concerned that the definitions of affirmative action and temporary special measures as outlined in the Convention have been misunderstood and misinterpreted by the Government to be protective measures. While legislation and institutional structures are essential to the advancement of women's status, they are not sufficient to address the ongoing preference for men in employment and politics. While the Committee recognizes that the establishment of quotas and other temporary special measures to promote women are often controversial, they have been shown to address effectively structural discrimination against women in politics and employment and to accelerate de facto equality of women.

76. The Committee recommends that the Government reconsider its position on temporary special measures and take note of the information and practice developed

internationally in structural discrimination. Such discrimination can be eliminated through temporary special measures. The Committee therefore recommends the provision of such measures, combined with numerical goals of a minimum of 30 per cent presence of women, as well as timetables to ensure women's increased presence in political parties, as well as in all sectors, segments and at all levels of employment.

77. The Committee is unclear as to whether the Coordinating Committee for the Problems of Women is provided with adequate resources, personnel and authority.

78. The Committee requests in the next report detailed information on the status and function of the Coordinating Committee for the Problems of Women, its programmes and their impact, with a special focus on the use of temporary measures and their effect. The Committee also recommends that the Government secure sufficient funds to enable the Coordinating Committee for the Problems of Women to guarantee the full implementation of the national plan of action. The Committee further recommends that the Government reconsider the name of the Coordinating Committee for the Problems of Women in order to reflect the view that "women's problems" as they are currently understood in Slovakia are in fact challenges faced by society and require a change to the current theoretical framework of dealing with them.

79. The Committee expresses alarm at the high rates of domestic violence against women, including murder in the home. The Committee is also concerned that charges cannot be brought against an abuser by the police independent of the victim and that securing a conviction often requires the corroboration of independent witnesses. Furthermore, there are no emergency or protective shelters available to victims of domestic violence.

80. The Committee recommends that the Government of Slovakia implement procedures designed to permit prosecution of violence against women independent of victim testimony and omitting the requirement that the complainant's evidence be corroborated; establish crisis centre hotlines and victim support centres equipped with medical, psychological and emotional support; and, in order to raise public awareness, disseminate information through the media, on this issue.

81. The Committee is concerned that information has not been provided or compiled on the actual situation regarding trafficking in women. The Committee notes that trafficking is an international crime and therefore not only concerns women trafficked out of Slovakia, but also those being trafficked into Slovakia from neighbouring countries.

82. The Committee requests that Slovakia pay particular attention to safeguarding the human rights of women and take all necessary measures to monitor and eradicate trafficking in women in Slovakia, including the sensitization of police, border officials and non-governmental organizations working in that area. The Committee encourages Slovakia to continue its cooperative efforts with border States to eliminate trafficking across national borders. The Committee also requests the Government to provide, in the next report, detailed information on the number of women who have been trafficked into Slovakia and those returned to their country of origin, as well as statistics on the number of individuals arrested, prosecuted and sentenced as a result of their involvement in trafficking.

83. The Committee notes with concern the limited involvement of non-governmental organizations in the preparation of the initial report.

84. The Committee recommends that the Government encourage the participation of women's non-governmental organizations in the drafting of national policy and in following up its implementation. The Committee also recommends that the Government take note of the importance of non-governmental organizations in increasing public awareness and countering traditional stereotypes of women.

85. The Committee expresses concern regarding the establishment of and increase in "household management schools", which cater to female students and train them for traditional roles, thus promoting gender stereotyping.

86. Stressing the importance of encouraging girls and boys to choose non-traditional fields of study in order to promote equal opportunity, the Committee requests further information, in the next report, on the purpose and composition of these schools as well as how the curricula differ from those in other schools.

87. The Committee is concerned with the highly segregated labour market which is accompanied by low pay for women. The segregation of women and men into different employment sectors is not a valid justification for unequal pay between women and men. The Committee is concerned that job descriptions that link "physically demanding" elements to male physical strength and to higher pay for men may be based on a one-sided understanding of those elements. These descriptions may underestimate other physically demanding elements found in women's work, thereby discriminating against women in terms of pay.

88. The Committee requests the Government to avail itself of the existing body of research and practice on equal pay for work of equal and comparable value in order to overcome

pay inequity. The Committee also recommends that the Government use temporary special measures to break through the sex segregation of the labour market.

89. The Committee is concerned that the Government did not answer the Committee's question as to why women in Slovakia are faced with the dilemma of choosing between work and raising a family. Although social services are available for children aged two years and above, there are no social services available for women with children under the age of two years. Furthermore, the decrease in pre-school childcare is particularly detrimental to women's equal opportunity in the employment market since, owing to lack of childcare, they have to interrupt their employment career, which again has negative effects on their employment status, pay and promotion.

90. The Committee recommends that the Government of Slovakia provide options to women who have children and choose to work, including establishment of and access to public day-care facilities. The Committee further recommends the funding and support of pre-school child-care centres at both the local and national levels to ensure women the opportunity to work.

91. The Committee expresses deep concern at the high rate of abortions among Slovak women. The Committee is concerned that abortion is being used as a form of family planning.

92. The Committee strongly recommends an increase in family planning education and accessibility to affordable and safe contraception in order to reduce the number of abortions carried out.

93. The Committee is concerned about the absence of development programmes for rural women to assist them in obtaining the skills and resources necessary to become competitive in the labour market.

94. The Committee recommends that the Government provide information on the measures undertaken to empower rural women and to encourage economic self-sufficiency.

95. The Committee is concerned that inadequate information was provided to the Committee on minority women in Slovakia.

96. The Committee recommends that the Government of Slovakia collect and make available statistical information pertaining to the social, economic and political status of minority women, with a view to developing specific policies to respond to the needs of different groups. The Committee also urges the Government to address the high rate of unemployment among Roma women and to provide further information on assistance programmes in the next report.

97. The Committee expresses regret that the report did not comply fully with its guidelines on the form and content of initial reports and that its general recommendations were not taken into account in the report.

98. The Committee requests that the next report follow the guidelines provided by the Committee in order to improve the presentation of information. It also recommends the serious consideration of the Committee's general recommendations during the creation of legislative measures and when drafting the next report.

99. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Slovakia of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Slovakia, and particularly government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in that regard. The Committee also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

South Africa

100. The Committee considered the initial report of South Africa (CEDAW/C/ZAF/1) at its 387th, 388th and 393rd meetings, on 24 and 29 June 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.387, 388 and 393).

Introduction by the State party

101. The representative of South Africa indicated that her country had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, without reservations, on 15 December 1995. The representative noted that the struggle to improve the status of women in South African society paralleled the country's efforts to reconstruct a society out of the legacy of the oppressive apartheid regime.

102. The representative informed the Committee that the new constitution was written in non-sexist and accessible language and had been widely disseminated in 11 languages and in Braille. The constitution guaranteed equality between men and women and prohibited discrimination on the basis of, *inter alia*, sex, pregnancy and marital status. Gender equality and provisions for affirmative action had also been constitutionally entrenched.

103. The representative noted that shortly after the new Government took office in 1994, an Office on the Empowerment of Women was established within the

President's office to develop a women's empowerment policy for the new Government. Following an extensive consultative review, South Africa adopted a national machinery with a multi-pronged approach to gender mainstreaming and transforming gender relations. The Office on the Status of Women operated within the Office of the Deputy President and was mandated to translate government objectives of gender equality into meaningful government programmes. A draft policy on women's empowerment and gender equality had recently been completed. The Commission on Gender Equality was charged with facilitating the transformation of gender relations in civil society through education and public advocacy. Despite those advances, the representative indicated that the national machinery still required consolidation.

104. The representative noted that continuing deep entrenchment of patriarchy and customary, cultural and religious practices contributed to widespread discrimination against women in South Africa. She informed the Committee that violence against women and children was increasing, including domestic violence, sexual violence and sexual harassment, and described several policy initiatives in that area.

105. The representative reported that only 6 per cent of African women 20 years and older had graduated from tertiary education, while 20 per cent of African women had not had any formal education. Unemployment was higher among women than men and women were most often self-employed, with little job security and lower incomes than those in the formal wage employment sector. Consequently, the Government had passed a number of bills designed to ameliorate the situation. The Government had also adopted temporary special measures in order to accelerate the equality between women and men in the public sector. A 1995 white paper on the transformation of the public service had set a target of 30 per cent for women among new recruits to middle and senior management within the public service. She noted that although few senior judges were currently women, a position paper on the transformation of the judiciary had recently been developed. She also indicated that South African women currently comprised 40 per cent of the staff of foreign missions.

106. The representative stated that the prevalence of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) was highest among heterosexual African women aged 20 to 24, particularly those who were poor and otherwise marginalized, and that health care was available to pregnant women and children under age six at State clinics and hospitals.

107. She indicated that according to the Customary Marriage Act, a woman married under customary law was deemed to be a minor under her husband's guardianship, but that Parliament was considering repeal of that and other acts pertaining to married women's rights under customary law.

108. The representative concluded by reiterating the Government's firm commitment to bringing its legislation in line with the Convention as well as to fully implementing the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action and to providing services that will improve the quality of life for women in South Africa.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

109. The Committee commends the Government of South Africa for ratifying the Convention, without reservations, in December 1995. It commends the Government for the clarity and frankness of the report as well as the oral presentation, and for the extensive replies to the questions posed by the Committee.

110. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of South Africa for its high-level delegation, headed by the Minister for Welfare and Population Development, which also included representatives of non-governmental organizations. The report refers to some of the Committee's general recommendations and describes programmes put in place to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

Positive aspects

111. The Committee notes the efforts undertaken by the Government at the level of legislation, policies, programmes and awareness-raising to redress the effects left by apartheid on women and to achieve gender equality. It recognizes the crucial role women have played in the country's transition to a democratic, multiracial society and their continuing active participation in and contribution to the creation of an enabling environment of respect for human rights.

112. The Committee commends the establishment of national machinery as well as other bodies for achieving the goal of gender equality. It also notes the active partnership of Government with non-governmental organizations and the existence of a vibrant women's movement.

113. The Committee notes with satisfaction that while health workers are not forced to participate in the provision of legal abortions, they may not obstruct access to services for termination of pregnancy.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

114. The Committee notes that the legacy of apartheid for women includes widespread discrimination and underdevelopment, and is visible in areas such as women's high levels of unemployment, illiteracy and poverty and in the violence against women.

115. The Committee notes that while the constitution of South Africa includes an equality clause, the continuing existence of conflicts between the constitution and religious and customary laws perpetuates practices in various areas that are discriminatory to women.

Principal subjects of concern and the Committee's recommendations

116. The Committee recommends the adoption of a definition of discrimination in the constitution and other legislation which reflects the definition contained in article 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The definition should be one which can be easily applied by courts in cases of discrimination on the basis of sex.

117. The Committee expresses concern that, in spite of the legal measures put in place, de facto implementation of such laws and policies have yet to be achieved in many areas. It also notes with concern the continuing recognition of customary and religious laws and their adverse effects on the inheritance and land rights of women and women's rights in family relations. The Committee notes the absence of a definition of gender discrimination in the constitution.

118. The Committee recommends that the Government complete, as a matter of priority, the adoption of legislation as well as ensure its effective implementation in order that women's *de jure* and de facto equality will be guaranteed. It also recommends that a uniform family code in conformity with the Convention be prepared in which unequal inheritance rights, land rights and polygamy are addressed, with the aim of abolishing them.

119. The Committee is concerned that the national machinery and the Commission on Gender Equality do not have sufficient financial and human resources.

120. The Committee encourages the Government to ensure that the national machinery as well as the Commission on Gender Equality are provided with adequate resources for entrenching gender equality firmly at this formative stage of the country's development as a democratic, multiracial society.

121. The Committee expresses its concern at the high level of violence against women, including the high incidence of rape, particularly of young girls. It notes in particular that, given the persistent overall high levels of crime and violence in the country, there is a danger that efforts to address violence against women, although identified as a priority area in the National Crime Prevention Strategy, may become submerged in the larger struggle against violence in society.

122. The Committee recommends that efforts to prevent and combat violence against women continue to receive the priority attention they require, with a view to ensuring a comprehensive approach. Steps should be taken, including through education, awareness-raising and sensitization of the public, to deal with stereotypical attitudes that are amongst the root causes of violence against women and to emphasize the unacceptability of such violence.

123. The Committee encourages the Government to reinforce its existing strong collaboration with civil society and non-governmental organizations on violence against women with budgetary allocations commensurate with the priority attached to combating such violence.

124. The Committee recommends that the seriousness of rape, including marital rape, be emphasized and the law fully enforced. It also urges the Government to undertake research into the causes of the high incidence of rape so that effective preventive measures can be developed.

125. The Committee regrets that insufficient attention was being devoted to the problem of trafficking in women.

126. The Committee recommends that both the legal situation and the reality with regard to trafficking in women be addressed, and requests that information on this issue be contained in South Africa's next report.

127. Notwithstanding the implementation of several temporary special measures in the political field and appointments to decision-making posts, the Committee is concerned whether such measures have become acceptable.

128. The Committee encourages the Government to continue the use of temporary special measures, including quota systems, in upcoming elections. The Government is also urged to assess ways of extending quota systems to other governmental or governmentally appointed bodies to increase women's participation therein. In that regard, particular attention should be paid to public bodies dealing with business and economic matters to facilitate women's achievement of decision-making positions in those fields. The Government is further urged to ensure that supportive mechanisms are in place for beneficiaries of temporary special measures. The Committee also suggests that the

Government consider carefully the advantages and disadvantages of different electoral systems for the representation of women.

129. Noting that women are under-represented in the judicial system, the Committee is concerned that women have problems gaining access to high judicial office. It is concerned that, in the appointment process, there is an emphasis on factors which generally favour male candidates.

130. The Committee recommends that special temporary measures, in accordance with article 4 of the Convention, be used to address the low number of women in the judiciary.

131. The Committee expresses serious concern at the chronic high rate of unemployment for women and the insufficient implementation of article 11 of the Convention. Given the large number of self-employed women and of women domestic/household workers, the level of their protection, including through insurance or social security schemes, raises grave concerns, as does the move towards regulated flexibility in employment legislation.

132. The Committee urges the Government to focus, as a matter of priority, on creating income generating activities for women. Existing efforts, including the use of quotas in job creation schemes, such as the community-based public works programme, should be expanded into areas where the number of unemployed women workers is particularly high.

133. The Committee is concerned about the uneven distribution of health care services in the country. It notes that insufficient data disaggregated by sex are being kept on birth rates and in disease registers. It notes with concern that the practice of female genital mutilation has not been given attention.

134. The Committee encourages the Government to continue its efforts to ensure equal access to health services throughout the entire country. It further encourages the Government to continue its efforts to ensure women, particularly poor women, access to family planning programmes and related information to increase women's choices and as a means of empowerment. It recommends further research into the prevalence of female genital mutilation and other harmful practices, such as witch burning, and recommends that the Government ensure the prohibition and eradication of such practices.

135. The Committee underlines that vulnerable groups of women, especially rural women, require specific measures to empower them to overcome the constraints of poverty, low levels of education and literacy, high unemployment and high fertility rates. It notes the need for rural women's participation in land reform programmes.

136. The Committee encourages the Government to implement special programmes for vulnerable groups of women in rural areas, including education and employment. The national machinery for women is encouraged to work actively on matters of land reform policy and problems of rural women to ensure their active participation in those areas.

137. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in South Africa of these concluding comments in order to make the people of South Africa, and particularly government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and further steps that are required in that regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

2. Combined second and third periodic reports

Nigeria

138. The Committee considered the combined second and third periodic reports of Nigeria (CEDAW/C/NGA/2-3) at its 396th and 397th meetings, on 2 July 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.396 and 397).

Introduction by the State party

139. In introducing the reports, which covered the period from 1987 to 1994, the representative noted that they demonstrated the progress made since the 1986 initial report and identified the remaining areas of difficulty in the promotion of equality between women and men in Nigeria. She noted that the reports addressed the impact of external factors on national efforts to promote equality between women and men.

140. The representative indicated that there had been an awareness-raising campaign concerning the need to have more women legislators and senators and that women had been elected into local government councils and the state and federal legislatures. However, the Government remained unsatisfied with the small number of women in elective positions.

141. The representative noted that, although education and training promoted equality between men and women, certain cultural and traditional practices and beliefs remained obstacles to women's full enjoyment of rights, including in the context of marriage, inheritance and land ownership.

142. The representative informed the Committee that a National Committee of Women and Children reviewed all laws relating to women and children, in order to bring them into conformity with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The National Commission for Women Decree had established a National Commission for Women in 1989 to coordinate the implementation of programmes to facilitate and enhance the advancement of women in Nigeria. The Commission had been upgraded to the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development. In addition, the state Ministries of Women Affairs and Social Development had been established in the 36 states of the Federation.

143. The representative informed the Committee that the Ministry of Women's Affairs sought to raise awareness among women and men of the need to empower women and to forge a new partnership based on mutual respect for the family. The Ministry of Women's Affairs had emphasized the importance of education and the acquisition of skills for women and girls.

144. The representative described several temporary special measures which had been adopted by the Government, including education committees relating to women, the appointment of women to decision-making positions and poverty alleviation measures to improve the economic status of women. She noted that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had been published in a simplified version by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development.

145. The representative noted that traditional practices had affected rural women more than urban educated women. The 1979 constitution, particularly article 31, addressed certain of these practices, and seminars for women had been organized to discourage these traditional practices. Domestic violence was seldom reported because of fear of reprisal and lack of response from law enforcement officials. Statistics relating to this problem would not be available until women were motivated to report domestic and other forms of violence.

146. The representative described measures to inform Nigerian women of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, including the production of instruction manuals and workbooks on the 12 critical areas of concern.

147. The representative noted that commercial banks frequently denied women credit because of lack of creditworthiness, and the Government had implemented several credit schemes, including the Family Economic Advancement Programme, which operated credit facilities for women and family units for the promotion of family enterprises.

148. The representative informed the Committee that rural women played an essential role in the agricultural sector, but had only been recognized in development plans within the last decade. She described several Government measures to address that situation.

149. The representative concluded by noting that, although significant progress had been achieved, much work still needed to be done in order to eliminate some of the customary, traditional and religious practices which impeded the advancement of women.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

150. The Committee commends the Federal Republic of Nigeria for having ratified the Convention in June 1985 without reservations. The Committee also commends the Government on the level of the delegation, led by the Minister for Women's Affairs and Social Development.

Positive aspects

151. The Committee notes with satisfaction that progress had been made in some areas since the previous report. Such progress includes the establishment of a Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Advancement of Women, and an increase in school attendance rates for girls and literacy rates for women. The number of women in decision-making posts had also increased.

152. The Committee commends the Government of Nigeria for improving rural women's access to drinking water and electricity.

Factors and difficulties affecting implementation of the Convention

153. The Committee notes the predominance of cultural stereotypes that are prejudicial to women. The Committee is also disturbed to learn about the continued existence of such practices as polygamy, inhumane rites undergone by widows, female circumcision and similar customs, which present serious dangers to the physical and emotional health of women and violate their fundamental human rights.

154. The coexistence of three legal systems, civil, religious and customary, make it difficult to adopt and enforce laws which genuinely protect women's rights.

Principal subjects of concern and the Committee's recommendations

155. The Committee regrets that the Government did not reply to all the questions raised in connection with the second and third periodic reports. The Committee recommends that Nigeria include answers to these questions in its next periodic report.

156. The Committee is very concerned about religious and customary laws and practices in the family context that violate women's human rights.

157. The Committee recommends that effective measures be taken to change laws and cultural norms which allow such practices as polygamy, one-sided repudiation, unequal subsistence rights and shares, as well as preventing women to travel without the permission of a male relative.

158. Notwithstanding ratification of the Convention without reservations, the Committee is concerned that the Convention is not being implemented within an adequate legal and constitutional framework.

159. The Committee recommends that the Government should fully respect the commitments and obligations arising under the Convention and that it should adopt all necessary measures in this regard.

160. The Committee is concerned by the lack of statistical data in the reports. While there are financial constraints in this context, the use of statistics allows a clearer understanding of progress since the previous report, including in the areas of domestic violence, prostitution, women's labour, including in the informal sector, and women's and children's health.

161. The Committee recommends that the Government should collect statistical information disaggregated by sex in all areas of importance in the lives of women and that such data should be used in future reports.

162. The Committee is concerned about the inadequate representation of women in the judiciary.

163. The Committee recommends that temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention be adopted to increase the participation of women in the judiciary.

164. The Committee is seriously concerned at the various forms of violence against women that exist in Nigeria and the absence of laws, programmes and policies to address this serious problem.

165. The Committee recommends that the Government collect information on this issue and introduce and enforce appropriate laws, programmes and policies to confront all forms of violence against women. It further recommends the establishment of shelters for victims and the introduction of measures to ensure that women are protected from reprisal where they report their victimization. The Committee also recommends the introduction, at all levels of education, of courses on women's and children's rights, as well as public awareness campaigns with regard to these issues.

166. Notwithstanding the Government's efforts in the field of education, the Committee is concerned at the low literacy rate among women and the low attendance rate by girls at secondary institutions.

167. The Committee encourages the Government to increase its efforts through implementation of a specific programme to reduce illiteracy among women, particularly in rural areas, and promote access by girls to secondary education. The Government should ensure that primary education is free.

168. The Committee is concerned that there are no statistics and information on AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. The Committee also notes that polygamy and prostitution were serious risk factors in the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

169. The Committee recommends that statistical data and information be compiled on the incidence of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

170. The Committee is alarmed by the rates of maternal and infant mortality and the lack of medical facilities for women and children.

171. The Committee encourages the Government to increase its efforts to guarantee access to medical services and hospital medical facilities, particularly in the context of women's health needs. The Committee notes that family planning programmes must be available to all, including young women and men, and stresses women's right to receive informed and reliable medical care. The Committee recommends that free access to health services should be a priority for Government. In this regard, it recommends that the Government take account of the recommendations of the United Nations Development Programme with respect to sustainable human development.

172. The Committee notes with concern that rural women had little access to education and to credit facilities.

173. The Committee recommends that the Government strengthen its socio-economic programmes so as to reduce discrimination suffered by rural women.

174. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Nigeria of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Nigeria, and particularly Government administrators and politicians aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and further steps that are required in that regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

Panama

175. The Committee considered the second and third periodic reports of Panama (CEDAW/C/PAN/2-3) at its 392nd and 393rd meetings, on 30 June 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.392 and 393).

Introduction by the State party

176. In introducing the report, the representative of Panama stated that Panama had recently gone to great efforts to advance the status of women. Those efforts had included the establishment of institutional mechanisms, the formulation of national action plans and programmes for the advancement of women and measures to promote the political participation of women and to combat violence against women.

177. The representative noted that, in 1995, the Government of Panama had established the National Women's Council and the National Women's Office, both of which were attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. She indicated that the Ministry of Youth, Women, Children and the Family had been created in 1997 and that one of its main functions was the promotion of gender equality. The Ministry of Youth, Women and Children would shortly submit a draft law on equality for the consideration of Parliament. In addition, most Government institutions had established special offices and programmes for the advancement of women.

178. The representative indicated that Panama had introduced various plans and programmes to raise the status of women. Non-governmental organizations had also been active and had formulated the Women and Development Action Plan. During 1993, all presidential candidates had committed themselves to implement the Plan. In 1997, a series of projects had also been launched under the Equal Opportunities Programme, a five-year programme supported by the European Union that seeks to mainstream gender in all public policies and programmes.

179. The representative informed the Committee of measures to increase the participation of women in political decision-making, including the Electoral Code, which now provided that at least 30 per cent of candidates in public elections should be women.

180. The representative indicated that the Government of Panama had prioritized the issue of violence against women and that the submission of a report to the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences had initiated the formulation of a national policy to address the underlying causes of violence against women.

181. The representative emphasized that, although much had been achieved, women in Panama still faced gender discrimination and negative cultural attitudes continued to reinforce the subordination of women. Women in Panama earned less than men and were not equally represented in positions of decision-making, while institutional mechanisms for gender equality lacked financial resources. She concluded by stressing the importance of sustained dialogue between the Government and civil society.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

182. The Committee welcomes the presence of the Minister of Youth, Women, Children and the Family and the fact that the delegation was at such a high level; it also thanks the Republic of Panama for submitting its combined second and third reports, noting that the report follows the Committee's guidelines and a format, which offered a better overview of the general situation of women and the implementation of the Convention than the previous report submitted to the Committee.

183. The Committee appreciates the Minister's efforts to reply to questions in her oral report, but notes that it would have been more useful to the experts if the questions asked by the group prior to the session had been answered in writing, thereby providing a reference tool for dialogue with the representative of the Republic of Panama.

Positive aspects

184. The Committee commends the establishment of the Ministry of Youth, Women, Children and the Family as the government body in charge of implementing the Convention at the national level.

185. The Committee commends the Government for its support for non-governmental organizations.

186. The Committee commends the promulgation of Act No. 22 of 14 July 1997, which reforms the Electoral Code

and provides that at least 30 per cent of the candidates for public election must be women.

187. The Committee also commends the promulgation of Act No. 27 of 16 June 1995, which qualified domestic violence and child abuse as crimes, thereby linking them with the institutional system established to deal with such violence. It also welcomes the establishment of family courts following the adoption of the Family Code.

188. The Committee also welcomes the Government's efforts to make the mass media more aware of, and to eliminate, sexism and the projection of women as sex objects in the media.

Factors hindering and blocking the implementation of the Convention

189. The Committee considers that one factor hindering the implementation of the Convention has been the difficult and special political, economic, social and legal situation in Panama.

190. The unequal distribution of wealth, which has kept 45 per cent of the population below the poverty level, as well as the institution of coercive measures and structural adjustment programmes also hinder the implementation of the Convention.

191. The high rate of unemployment in the metropolitan and in the rural areas is also an inhibiting factor.

Areas of concern and recommendations of the Committee

192. The Committee is concerned that neither the constitution of the Republic of Panama nor any other legislative provision made clear or specific reference to the elimination of discrimination against women.

193. The Committee recommends that all legislation be revised to provide expressly for the elimination of discrimination against women.

194. The Committee notes with concern the failure to disseminate and publicize the Convention at various levels of Panamanian society.

195. The Committee recommends that a major campaign should be mounted to disseminate the principles of the Convention and provide education and training in them, especially among judges, lawyers, journalists, teachers and Panamanian women.

196. The Committee requests that the next report should contain gender-specific statistics so as to shed light on the results of the various programmes proposed and awaiting realization.

197. The Committee expresses deep concern at the general situation of working women in Panama. Despite the legal provisions guaranteeing equal pay for equal work, the reality was different. Women continue to be discriminated against in the workplace. In addition, women have no effective protection with respect to maternity leave and breastfeeding breaks. Further, although often better educated than men, women accounted for only 28 per cent of the economically active population.

198. The Committee recommends the initiation of a campaign by the national machinery to guarantee equality of treatment in the workplace. It further recommends that legislation on the right to maternity leave and breastfeeding breaks be implemented vigorously to ensure adequate protection for women.

199. The Committee is concerned that 53 per cent of the female population is illiterate, the majority of these being indigenous women. It also expresses concern at the persistence of gender stereotypes, which results in a large number of adolescent girls terminating their education at an early age to marry or to undertake domestic work.

200. The Committee recommends that, as a matter of urgency, the Government of Panama should mount an aggressive educational campaign designed to ensure that all Panamanian girls and women have a full education and to reduce sharply the number of adolescent girls leaving school early to work in unskilled employment or to marry.

201. The Committee expresses deep concern in connection with the reproductive health of Panamanian women and an apparent setback in the treatment of the right to abortion in cases where the pregnancy is the result of rape. The Committee recommends that multidisciplinary measures should be taken to provide special care to the victims of sexual violence which should include legal and psychological assistance for the victim. It also recommends that Panamanian women who are pregnant as a result of rape should be granted the opportunity to seek termination of such pregnancies.

202. The Committee recommends training programmes for women political leaders and encourages the large-scale participation of women in democratic activities and decision-making.

203. The Committee expresses concern at the discriminatory treatment received by women engaged in prostitution in Panama, especially the statement that a prostitute would find it difficult to seek legal redress in the case of rape since the Code still requires the victim in that situation to be chaste and virtuous in order to be able to institute legal proceedings.

204. The Committee recommends that a serious effort be made to eliminate entrenched stereotypes.

205. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Panama of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Panama, and particularly Government administrators and politicians aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps that are required in that regard. It also requests that the Government continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

United Republic of Tanzania

206. The Committee considered the combined second and third periodic reports of the United Republic of Tanzania (CEDAW/C/TZA/2-3) at its 394th and 395th meetings, on 1 July 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.394 and 395).

Introduction by the State party

207. In introducing the reports, which covered the period from 1990 to 1996, the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania informed the Committee that, since the first report in 1990, the country had changed from a one-party system to a multi-party democracy, with the first democratic elections being held in 1995, and that political reforms had provided great scope for the participation of women's non-governmental organizations.

208. The representative noted ongoing economic reforms, including structural adjustment programmes, which had adversely affected women, *inter alia*, because of their low incomes and levels of education, and had impeded their ability to compete in the free market.

209. The representative informed the Committee that the National Women's Machinery had been elevated to two full-fledged Ministries, namely, the Ministry of Community Development, Women's Affairs and Children, on Tanzania mainland, and the Ministry of State, Women and Children in Zanzibar, and not just one Ministry on the mainland. She noted that the constitution upheld the principle of equality, but that the definition of "discrimination" did not include "sex" as a ground of discrimination. However, the Government was considering amendments to the constitution, which would provide an opportunity to incorporate "sex" as a ground of discrimination.

210. The representative outlined steps to reform laws that discriminate against women, noting that several laws, including some customary laws, had been identified as contradicting human rights principles. Amendments had been made to the laws relating to sexual offences and new laws had been introduced relating to trafficking in women, the exploitation of prostitution and criminalizing the practice of female genital mutilation. Consideration had also been given to amending laws relating to women's rights to land. The representative noted that the multiple sources of law, including statutory, customary and religious laws, impeded implementation of the Convention in some areas. In this regard, she noted that the Law of Marriage Act recognized polygamous marriages.

211. The representative informed the Committee of steps that had been taken to inform the public of women's rights, including the publication of a booklet on women's rights, and the translation of the Convention into Kiswahili, the national language of the United Republic of Tanzania. The Beijing Platform for Action was also being used as resource material to educate women and girls about their rights. Non-governmental organizations had been active in sensitizing the general public and government officials to violations of women's rights.

212. The representative informed the Committee that affirmative action measures had been implemented in the areas of political participation and decision-making, employment and education. She noted that the drop-out rate of girls at school remained high, and that access to secondary and advanced levels of education for girls was low.

213. The representative indicated that, although violence against women, including sexual assault and harassment and domestic violence, remained serious problems, few statistics had been collected. Young girls were particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse, as men believed there was less risk of contracting HIV/AIDS from them, among other reasons. Traditions and customary practices, including female genital mutilation, affected implementation of the Convention.

214. The representative informed the Committee that the deterioration of women's health was attributable to poor hygiene, heavy workloads, undernourishment, frequent births and to the fact that high levels of poverty and maternal mortality rates had increased sharply. Family planning programmes in the United Republic of Tanzania had been successful and measures had been taken to improve public awareness of HIV/AIDS.

215. The representative stated that a women's development fund had been established in 1994, in order to mobilize resources, provide loans, act as a guarantee fund, create employment and income generation and offer business advisory services for women.

216. The representative informed the Committee that approximately 80 per cent of the population in the United Republic of Tanzania live in rural areas. Government policies to provide basic services such as safe water, health facilities, appropriate technologies and good infrastructure had been impeded as a result of the economic difficulties facing the country. In addition, special attention had been given to the role of women in the management of the water supply and sanitation. However, the traditional irrigation system remained male dominated.

217. The representative concluded by emphasizing difficulties caused by lack of resources, noting that the high level of foreign debt servicing, combined with the low levels of international aid, meant that there were few resources to implement programmes, including those for the advancement of women.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

218. The Committee congratulates the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the submission of its combined second and third periodic reports. It notes that the reports complied to a large extent with its guidelines concerning the form and content of periodic reports. The Committee appreciates the delegation's oral presentation, which covered most of the questions asked by the Committee's pre-session working group.

219. While expressing its appreciation for the high-level delegation, including the Principal Secretary to the Ministry of Community Development, Women's Affairs and Children, and her candid oral presentation, the Committee regrets that the report lacks sufficient information and statistics and thus fails to deliver a complete picture of the progress made in the implementation of the Convention since the country compiled its initial report, which had been considered in 1990.

Positive aspects

220. The Committee commends the initiative of the Government in elevating its national machinery from a department to a full-fledged ministry, which had produced a policy which supported women's rights.

221. The Committee welcomes the enactment of a new law which criminalizes female genital mutilation as a concrete step towards eliminating violence against women and the girl child.

222. The Committee welcomes the efforts made by the Government to review and revise existing national laws in accordance with the Convention.

223. The Committee also welcomes the active involvement of non-governmental organizations and women's groups in advancing the status of women in the United Republic of Tanzania and encourages the Government to develop further its partnership with these groups.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

224. The Committee notes the current economic situation of the United Republic of Tanzania and the burden posed by servicing its foreign debt.

225. The Committee is of the view that traditional practices and the existence of a multiplicity of laws hinders the advancement of women. It also notes the problems associated with stereotypical roles of women and men.

Principal subjects of concern and the Committee's recommendations

226. The Committee is concerned that the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania did not explicitly define gender discrimination.

227. The Committee urges the Government to consider, as a matter of priority, incorporating a definition of discrimination in accordance with article 1 of the Convention as a ground of discrimination in the constitution.

228. The Committee regrets that the report does not sufficiently examine obstacles to the elimination of discrimination against women and the advancement of the status of women in society. This is necessary in order to formulate effective strategies. The Committee suggests that the Government may need to re-examine its policies and programmes for the implementation of the Convention and the advancement of women. Further, the Committee regrets that the report does not include information on the impact of policies and programmes that had been successfully implemented since the time of the submission of the initial report.

229. The Committee expresses concern at the fact that the prevailing customary laws and religious laws which sometimes supersede the constitution are discriminatory towards women. In particular, the Committee notes that several groups in the United Republic of Tanzania are entitled to practise polygamy. The Committee points out that customary laws and religious laws continue to govern private life and notes the critical importance of eliminating discrimination against women in the private sphere.

230. The Committee recommends immediate action to modify customary laws and religious laws to comply with the constitution and the Convention. It also requests more information on measures that had been taken or would be taken as follow-up to the Customary Law Declaration of 1963. It recommends that the Government organize awareness-raising campaigns for the general public, as well as training courses to sensitize policy makers, the judiciary and law enforcement officers and seek assistance from United Nations agencies in the region for such activities.

231. The Committee notes with concern that, although legislation is in place to ensure equality between women and men in the United Republic of Tanzania, in reality, women's human rights were often violated. The Committee points out that, although some temporary special measures have been introduced to ensure the participation of women in policy-making, the number of women in the Parliament and local authorities is still very small. The Committee further notes that more women than men are confined to low-paid, insecure jobs with no legal protection.

232. The Committee strongly recommends that the Government take concrete action, including temporary special measures, to redress the situation.

233. The Committee notes with serious concern the problem faced by Tanzanian women with regard to violence against women, especially domestic violence, which is condoned by customary laws.

234. The Committee strongly recommends that violence against women in all its forms be criminalized, that law and practice to achieve this objective be developed and effectively enforced and that shelters for women who have been subjected to violence be established and adequately resourced.

235. The Committee is concerned with the disadvantaged situation of rural women who comprise the majority of the rural population, and the majority of workers in rural areas. The Committee further notes that customary and religious laws are practised and accepted more widely in rural areas and, *inter alia*, often prevent women from inheriting and owning land and property. Food taboos, which are more prevalent in rural areas, are a serious concern to the Committee, as they are not only harmful to the health of women, including mothers, but also impact on the health of future generations.

236. The Committee recommends that laws of inheritance and succession be formulated so as to guarantee rural women their rights of inheritance and ownership of land and property. It also recommends that a programme be introduced to educate rural women about their rights and that steps be taken to remove all traditional practices, including food taboos, which are harmful to the health of women.

237. The Committee notes with concern that the infant and maternal mortality rate is still high, despite the efforts made since the time of the country's initial report.

238. The Committee recommends that the Government make vigorous efforts to address this serious problem and seek assistance of the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and other relevant United Nations agencies.

239. The Committee notes the establishment of a women's development fund. The Committee requests that detailed information on the mandates, budget and projects of the fund be included in the next report.

240. While it recognizes that collection and analysis of data might have financial implications, the Committee points out that more detailed information should have been obtained and included in the report. The Committee deeply regrets that the report lacked more explicit information, including statistics on issues such as the exact types of punishment for those committing violence against women; the new, expanded definition of rape; forms of female genital mutilation that are practised in the United Republic of Tanzania; the situation of trafficking in women and girls; revisions made to educational materials in order to include a gender perspective; the situation of HIV/AIDS and women in the United Republic of Tanzania.

241. The Committee notes the large number of refugee women currently resident in Tanzania and requests further information on the situation of refugee women and any Government programmes in place to address their needs.

242. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in the United Republic of Tanzania of these concluding comments in order to make the people, and particularly government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women, and further steps that are required in this regard. It also requested the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations, and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

3. Combined third and fourth periodic reports

New Zealand

243. The Committee considered the combined third and fourth periodic reports of New Zealand

(CEDAW/C/NZL/3-4 and Add.1) at its 401st and 402nd meetings, on 8 July 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.401 and 402).

Introduction by the State party

244. In introducing the combined report, the representative conveyed a personal message of greeting from New Zealand's Prime Minister and the Minister of Women's Affairs, the Right Honourable Jenny Shipley. The representative noted that the report was a record of continuing progress for women. The economic reforms initiated in 1984 had led to an open and competitive economy and New Zealand's economic performance had improved considerably since the early 1990s. Recent developments in Asia, however, were of concern to the Government.

245. The representative described the steps taken by the Government to implement the Beijing Platform for Action in six cross-cutting themes.

246. The representative then highlighted initiatives in the area of legislative reform, policy development and the delivery of better services for women since 1994. She highlighted, in particular, the adoption of the 1995 Domestic Violence Act. The issuance of the 1996 Statement of Policy on Family Violence and the allocation of substantial financial resources for the development of collaborative anti-violence prevention and response strategies were also noted.

247. A comprehensive time-use survey was being conducted by Statistics New Zealand, sponsored by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, to document the contribution of women's and men's unpaid activities to the economy and to provide assistance in the development of government policies and programmes. Māori statistical advisers were being consulted to ensure that the survey would accurately record Māori activities.

248. The introduction of the Matrimonial Property Amendment Bill and the De Facto Relationships (Property) Bill sought to achieve fair distribution of property to women upon the death of a spouse or dissolution of marriage. The women's access to justice project was aimed at making legal services more accessible to women.

249. The representative noted that a Women's Commissioner on the Human Rights Commission had been designated for the first time in New Zealand. The Commissioner would provide an annual report on the progress of women's human rights in New Zealand and would complement the work of the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

250. Women's participation in the labour market was increasing dramatically and women were responsible for 40 per cent of new businesses. The Māori Women's Development Fund and the Women in Self-Employment Network provided financial and peer support to women entrepreneurs.

251. Substantial gains had been achieved in women's political participation with an increase in appointments and reappointments made by the Cabinet Committee on Appointments and Honours from 25 per cent in 1993 to 31 per cent in 1997. The Government was seeking gender balance on statutory boards by the year 2000.

252. In order to improve the health of women and families, and recognizing the importance of women's sexual and reproductive health, the Government had introduced the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy to raise awareness of responsible sexual behaviour and to improve information about and access to contraception, particularly among high-risk groups. A national breast-screening programme, to be implemented in December 1998, would provide free biannual screenings for women between the ages of 50 and 64.

253. Given a continuing gender pay gap, whereby women earn approximately 80.5 per cent of men's average hourly earnings, the Government was taking further measures to reduce the discrepancy, including research and data analysis, awareness-raising and doubling the funding ratio for the Equal Employment Opportunities Trust.

254. Progress in women's education had led to a higher number of women than men enrolled in tertiary education. The number of Māori in tertiary education had more than doubled over the past five years with Māori women outnumbering Māori men.

255. Turning to New Zealand's two reservations, the representative noted that further progress was expected over the next reporting period with respect to removal of the reservation on the role of women in combat. While there were no immediate plans to withdraw the reservation related to paid maternity leave, the representative noted that research had revealed that the provisions for parental leave available in New Zealand were in many respects among the best in the world and that New Zealand was moving towards a situation where comparable social benefits might be realized in the future.

256. In 1998, the Government had announced the Work Focused Welfare policy which would require domestic purpose beneficiaries to look for full or part-time work, depending on the age of their children. Furthermore, social benefits continue to be provided and have been extended to

single parents to make it easier for them to take up work and provide childcare.

257. The representative noted that New Zealand's report included material on Tokelau. The representative concluded the reporting responsibilities of the self-governing States of Cook Islands and Niue, which were included in New Zealand's ratification of the Convention, were currently under examination.

Concluding comments by the Committee

Introduction

258. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of New Zealand for submitting, in a timely manner, a well-structured and well-written combined third and fourth periodic report, and for the fact that non-governmental organizations had been consulted in its preparation. It commends the Government on its oral presentation of the report and for the extensive replies to the questions posed by the Committee.

259. The Committee commends the Government of New Zealand for having sent a high-level delegation, headed by the associate Minister of Women's Affairs. It notes that the report described steps taken by the Government to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

Positive aspects

260. The Committee commends the Government's sensitivity to the situation of Māori women, and its efforts to overcome obstacles to Māori women's achievement of equality.

261. The Committee also notes new legislative efforts undertaken by the Government, in particular the adoption of the Domestic Violence Act of 1995, and the designation of a Women's Commissioner on the Human Rights Commission. It welcomes the effort to remove the reservation relating to women in combat.

262. The Committee commends the Government's efforts to implement the Beijing Platform for Action under six cross-cutting themes, including through mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development of all policies and programmes, and improved data collection on all aspects of women's lives.

263. The Committee welcomes the acceptance by the Government of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention concerning the Committee's meeting time. It also expressed its appreciation for the Government's active participation in the elaboration of and support for an optional protocol to the Convention.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

264. The Committee notes with concern the continuing existence of reservations to the Convention, particularly with regard to paid maternity leave.

265. The Committee considers that the existing legislative and de facto framework for women in the formal labour market, including pay equity, employment contracts and women's family responsibilities, constitute a serious impediment to the full implementation of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

266. The Committee expresses serious concern at the continuing existence of a reservation to article 11, subparagraph 2 (b), on paid maternity leave. It is concerned that the requirement for women to negotiate maternity leave individually with their employers, rather than being established as a matter of national law and policy, is a disadvantage for New Zealand's women. It is also concerned about the constraints for obtaining unpaid maternity leave and the lack of awareness by women of existing unpaid parental leave rights.

267. The Committee recommends that the Government examine in greater detail paid maternity leave provisions that exist in a number of countries at a comparative level of economic and social development. It also recommends that the Government study the impact of existing maternity leave provisions on women's equal pay and career opportunities. The Government should also consider the possible long-term impact of this situation, especially in conjunction with the proposed Matrimonial Property Amendment Bill, which does not recognize future earnings in divorce settlements.

268. Noting that there is an increase of women in part-time or casual work and an insufficient number of full-time jobs for women, the Committee expresses concern that the impact on women of economic restructuring in the country continues to be insufficiently addressed by the Government. It is seriously concerned that legislation such as the Employment Contracts Act of 1991, which emphasizes individual employment contracts rather than collective agreements, constitutes a major disadvantage for women in the labour market due to their dual responsibilities to work and family.

269. The Committee urges the Government to assess the impact of existing free-market legislation on women's ability to compete on an equal basis with men in the labour market and to assess the benefits that women derived from the favourable economic situation of recent years. It recommends that the Government recognize maternity as a social function which must not constitute a structural

disadvantage for women with regard to their employment rights.

270. The Committee recommends the proactive use of temporary special measures in the public and private sectors in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, to accelerate women's de facto equality in employment.

271. The Committee recommends that the Government consider ratifying International Labour Organization Convention 103 (Rev).

272. The Committee also recommends that the Government systematically monitor trends on the situation of women, especially in the employment field, and assess regularly the impact of legislative and policy measures to achieve women's equality in accordance with the Convention.

273. The Committee expresses serious concern about the continuing wage-differential between women and men, which is not expected to narrow under current trends, and is due in part to the over-representation of women in lower-paid occupations and their under-representation in above-average wage-growth sectors. It expresses serious concern at existing pay differentials between women and men for equal work, and at the impact of the repeal of the Employment Equity Act on women's equal pay rights.

274. The Committee recommends that further efforts, including through legislation and innovative policies, be undertaken to reduce the gender pay gap. The impact of the Privacy Act on women's ability to seek redress in court for discriminatory unequal pay should be examined. The Government should also consider developing an "equal pay for work of comparable value" strategy, and reinstate respective legislation.

275. The Committee expresses concern that the ongoing privatization of social services and the introduction of fee-based systems in areas such as health reduces women's, especially poor and Māori women's, access thereto.

276. The Committee recommends that the Government closely monitor the impact of privatization on social services, especially in health, so as to ensure equal access to quality health care for all women.

277. The Committee expresses concern that the Matrimonial Property Amendment Bill and the De Facto Relationships (Property) Bill, introduced in Parliament in March, differentiate between the rights of married women in the division of property upon the death of a husband or following divorce, and the rights of women upon separation from a de facto partner. It is also concerned that the Matrimonial Property Amendment Bill does not take into consideration future earnings of a husband with regard to property divisions in divorce settlements.

278. The Committee recommends that the Government reconsider the content of the De Facto Relationships (Property) Bill with a view to bringing it in line with the Matrimonial Property Amendment Bill, especially since de facto relationships are more common among the Māori population and are growing among the population in general.

279. The Committee is concerned that the situation of Māori women remained unsatisfactory in many areas, including in respect to the high percentage of Māori girls leaving school early, higher-than-average teenage pregnancy rates, the continuing low number of Māori women in tertiary education, their employment situation, their absence from the judiciary and political decision-making, their health situation and access to health services and higher-than-average incidences of domestic violence.

280. The Committee urges the Government to continue its efforts to implement fully the Treaty of Waitangi, with particular emphasis on achieving equality for Māori women in all areas covered by the Convention.

281. The Committee urges the Government to translate, as a matter of priority, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into the Māori language, and to distribute it widely in Māori communities, so as to increase New Zealand women's awareness of their rights.

282. The Committee expresses concern that, despite progress made in achieving women's equal participation in political and public life, including in Parliament, the Judiciary and in statutory boards, there was little effort to achieve targets set for gender balance through the use of temporary special measures.

283. The Committee recommends that the Government consider introducing a broad range of measures, including targets and flexible numerical goals. The advantages and disadvantages of the current electoral system, namely, Mixed Member Proportional Representation System, on the percentage of women in Parliament should be assessed and, if necessary, amendments introduced to increase the numbers of women in Parliament.

284. The Committee considers that the merely advisory and coordinating nature of the Ministry for Women's Affairs is an impediment to furthering women's human rights in New Zealand.

285. The Committee recommends that the status and decision-making capacity of the Ministry for Women's Affairs be upgraded.

286. The Committee expresses concern that the Government did not provide sufficient data and information on the

situation of prostitution, the Prostitutes Collective and the treatment of sex workers who were in the country illegally.

287. The Committee recommends that the Government provide more information on those issues in its next report. In addition, the Committee wishes to be informed as to which economic activity sex work is included with for the purpose of the national accounts and the time-use survey.

288. The Committee expresses concern that the lack of comparative data disaggregated by sex and ethnicity and collected over time impeded the Committee's full understanding of changes in the de facto situation of women's human rights.

289. The Committee recommends that the Government supply more data of that kind in its next report.

290. The Committee requests that the Government responds in its next periodic report to the outstanding questions, particularly in relation to the implementation of article 11 of the Convention, posed during its constructive dialogue with the representative of New Zealand.

291. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in New Zealand of the present concluding comments, in order to make the people of New Zealand, and particularly Government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that had been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and further steps that are required in that regard. It also requested the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular, to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

Peru

292. The Committee considered the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Peru (CEDAW/C/PER/3-4) at its 397th and 398th meetings, on 6 July 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.397 and 398).

Introduction by the State party

293. The representative of Peru informed the Committee that, since 1990, women's access to education, employment and health care services in Peru had improved. The right to equality before the law and freedom from discrimination had been entrenched in the 1993 constitution, and the Government of Peru had introduced legislative measures to ensure *de jure* equality to women and to encourage their full participation in the social, political and economic development of the country. The representative acknowledged that, despite the introduction of these and other policies designed to respond to the current socio-political and economic changes, structural inequalities persisted.

294. The representative noted recent legislative changes, including the statutory definition of discrimination, legal provisions guaranteeing pregnant adolescents and mothers access to education, the obligation to ensure that candidates' lists for all public elections included a minimum of 25 per cent of women or men, the removal of all protective measures relating to women's employment and the reform of the penal code provision allowing rapists to avoid prosecution by marrying their victims.

295. The representative described institutional mechanisms to ensure implementation of these legislative guarantees, including the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Human Development established in 1996 and the Special Office for the Defence of the Rights of Women within the office of the Special Ombudsperson.

296. The representative stated that, of the 5 million women living in poverty, 18 per cent live in extreme poverty but that the Government had committed itself to a 50 per cent reduction in the rate of extreme poverty by the year 2000.

297. The representative informed the Committee that domestic and sexual violence continued to be a serious problem. However, only a fraction of victims reported incidents of abuse. He noted approaches which had been introduced to eradicate violence against women, including the 1993 Domestic Violence Act, awareness-raising campaigns, the establishment of police offices for women, training of members of the police force, prosecutors and judges and the creation of shelters.

298. The representative stated that women living in rural areas, particularly those belonging to indigenous groups, remained marginalized and had higher rates of maternal mortality, adolescent pregnancy and illiteracy than women living in Peru's urban centres. The representative noted that among the illiterate population in Peru, 72 per cent were women, the majority of whom were rural, indigenous women. Integrated literacy programmes had been designed and were being implemented by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women.

299. The representative noted that economically active women were primarily concentrated in trading, the hotel and restaurant sectors, agriculture and manufacturing; most women were over-represented in the lower income bracket.

300. The representative indicated that pregnancy rates among adolescents were high, particularly among indigenous groups and that the maternal mortality rate was high at 261

deaths per 100,000 live births, but that this was being addressed through the implementation of an emergency plan. In addition, the Programme for Reproductive Health and Family Planning for 1996–2000 had guaranteed access to an integrated range of services designed to address, *inter alia*, maternal health, contraception and sexually transmitted diseases.

301. The representative stated that, during the past 10 years, there had been significant displacement from rural communities to urban centres and that the Government was currently seeking to identify internally displaced persons. Many displaced persons, the majority of whom were women, had been returned to their places of origin and the Ministry for the Advancement of Women had provided emergency support and reintegration programmes to women heads of households.

302. The representative concluded by reaffirming his Government's commitment to the implementation of the Convention and to providing the Committee with all the necessary materials to assist it in its task.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

303. The Committee expresses its gratitude to the Government of Peru for the comprehensive and frank information contained in its third and fourth periodic reports, as well as in the supplementary report, explaining current policies, projects and programmes for implementation of the Convention. The Committee also welcomes the comprehensive answers to the questions posed by the pre-session working group, which had provided further information regarding the situation of Peruvian women and the obstacles which continued to impede implementation of the Convention.

304. The Committee stresses the need to include, in subsequent reports and on an ongoing basis, comparative statistical data for men and women covering different periods so as to be able to assess meaningfully and in appropriate depth changes in the situation of Peruvian women.

305. The Committee welcomes the Peruvian delegation, headed by the Deputy Minister for the Advancement of Women and Human Development.

Positive aspects

306. The Committee notes the efforts made by the Peruvian Government to promote compliance with its commitment to implement the Convention, notwithstanding the difficult situation being faced by the country owing to the economic crisis and terrorist violence.

307. The Committee notes that since the entry into force of the 1993 constitution, the Government of Peru has been introducing significant new legislation together with reforms in current legislation to promote compliance with the Convention, including the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman, establishment of the independence of the judiciary, and Act No. 26260 on Domestic Violence, which represents a fundamental advance in confronting a serious problem in Peruvian society.

308. The Committee views as especially significant the establishment of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Human Development as a mechanism for the advancement of women in the country and the attainment of gender equality. In that regard it listened with great interest to the policies and programmes being undertaken by the Government, as well as its objective of implementation as quickly as possible of the follow-up programme to the Beijing Platform for Action and the Cairo Programme of Action.

309. The Committee emphasizes collaboration by Peruvian civil society as a whole and in particular by women's non-governmental organizations; in that regard, it considers that their ties with the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Human Development offers a suitable framework for implementation of the Convention.

Factors and difficulties affecting implementation of the Convention

310. One of the main obstacles to full implementation of the Convention is poverty, which affects 44 per cent of Peruvian women. The situation is worsening, with 18 per cent of women living in extreme poverty. Long-term poverty as a result of structural adjustment policies divorced from social development, debt-servicing and the aftermath of terrorism has led to a serious deterioration in the quality of life of millions of women, who have no access to education, medical and hospital services, employment and the basic resources needed for subsistence. Notwithstanding the national strategy for poverty alleviation introduced by the Government, the feminization of poverty is a reality in the country, and is worsening in rural areas and indigenous settlements, as well as in areas declared emergency zones. Although the Committee notes that government macroeconomic indicators show progress, and that there has been a distinct reduction in the percentage of people classified as poor, more than half the country's population (13 million) suffer from poverty or extreme poverty.

Principal subjects of concern and the Committee's recommendations

311. The Committee notes with great concern the situation of women who have been displaced from their places of origin with their families as a result of terrorist activity. It takes note of the programmes being implemented by the Government to return such women to their places of origin or to settle them where they currently resided.

312. The Committee recommends that the greatest possible care should be given to such women, who, in the main, were heads of household, and who should be the beneficiaries of programmes to promote their participation in the labour force together with access for them and their families to education, health care, housing, drinking water and other essential services.

313. The Committee notes with concern that, notwithstanding the introduction of significant legal changes for implementation of the provisions of the Convention, inequality between men and women is still a reality in Peru.

314. The Committee recommends the formulation of a working strategy involving training, publicity and legal literacy regarding the new legal provisions to achieve de facto compliance with legislation promoting the rights of women. It also recommends systematic dissemination of the Convention at all levels, to men and women in communities, and in particular to all government authorities and persons responsible for its implementation. There is also a need for penalties against those infringing current legislation.

315. The Committee notes that, under the 1993 constitution, international agreements form part of national legislation. It is not clear whether, in order to implement this provision, the Convention has been adopted by Congress.

316. The Committee recommends that an explanation be given in the next report as to whether the Convention is already incorporated in legislation, whether the judiciary has the authority to implement Convention provisions before the courts, what degree of access there is for women to the Convention and to the Ombudsman and, lastly, whether cases of discrimination have been resolved by the courts with reference to the Convention.

317. The Committee notes the prevalence, throughout Peruvian society, of socio-cultural patterns of behaviour that perpetuated prejudices and discrimination against women. The Committee draws attention to the fact that, despite the legislative changes and the commitment of the Government of Peru to implement the Convention, change would not come about in practice unless efforts are made to change society's attitudes to and prejudices with respect to women.

318. The Committee recommends, as a matter of priority, the inclusion in gender equality programmes of a component to promote the gradual elimination of such harmful stereotypes, and a general awareness-raising campaign to eradicate them. It suggests prioritizing those sectors with the greatest impact on the population, such as the various levels of education, the mass media, health sector agencies and workers, community leaders and others.

319. The Committee expresses concern as to whether the definition contained in Act No. 26772, which establishes what is meant by discrimination, is consistent with article 1 of the Convention relating to direct and indirect discrimination. It also expresses concern at a clause in the Act which defined discrimination as "the act of according different treatment to people, without there being any objective and reasonable justification, on the basis of race, sex, ...".

320. The Committee recommends that "any objective and reasonable justification" be used only as a basis for the implementation of temporary special measures which accelerate the de facto equality between women and men. It further requests the Government of Peru to include information on the manner in which the criterion of "objective and reasonable justification" has been implemented and whether a definition of discrimination reflecting article 1 of the Convention is now an enforceable part of the law.

321. The Committee observes that article 4 is being misinterpreted and that no distinction is being made between protective measures and the definitions of affirmative temporary special measures contemplated in the Convention. However, reference is made, in the supplementary report, to the requirement that, as an affirmative action measure, 25 per cent of the candidates on the lists of candidates for election to Parliament must be women.

322. The Committee recommends that the Government take steps to help increase the access of women to management and, in particular, decision-making posts. The Committee requests that the next report contain the results of the steps taken to increase the access of women to Parliament through the requirement of a 25 per cent quota for women in the lists of candidates.

323. The Committee is concerned at the lack of information on the migration of Peruvian women abroad and on the protection afforded to them by the Government, given the new problem created by the vulnerability of such women to exploitation and discrimination.

324. The Committee requests information on the issue in the next periodic report.

325. The Committee expresses concern at the effects of regulating prostitution and wishes to know whether such regulation has the effect of protecting the rights of prostitutes and preventing them from falling victim to violence, trafficking and exploitation and from contracting diseases or whether, on the contrary, it protects the health of the clients and makes it easier for them to obtain sexual services.

326. The Committee recommends that the next periodic report contain information on:

(a) Any increase or decrease in the number of women prostitutes;

(b) The existence of under-age prostitutes;

(c) The situation of women who engage in prostitution without meeting the established requirements, and that of their clients;

(d) The number of women and men who have been accused, arrested, tried and convicted for offences relating to prostitution and trafficking in persons;

(e) Sociological characteristics of women engaged in prostitution;

(f) The prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases and other diseases among prostitutes.

327. The Committee expresses concern at the fact that, although the report mentions Act No. 26260 on domestic violence, it does not make reference to any specific measures taken to deal with cases of violence, including incest, the incidence of which is extremely high. Moreover, the Committee is deeply disturbed by the instances of sexual violence against rural and indigenous women and the high rate of sexual abuse of teenagers and girls in emergency zones.

328. The Committee recommends that the Government take the necessary practical measures to implement the Act and make necessary efforts to treat the victims and to provide training to police officers, members of the army, and court, medical and paramedical personnel, psychologists and nursing staff whose job it is to treat the victims. The Committee also recommends that official records be kept and the necessary monitoring system be established so as to make it possible to evaluate the magnitude of the problem and how it is evolving. The women's police offices have been a valid initiative to deal with such situations but they appear to be insufficient.

329. The Committee emphasizes the vital importance of education in improving the situation of women. It notes with concern that drop-out rates among girls are very high, particularly in poor urban areas and in rural and indigenous areas.

330. The Committee recommends that programmes be undertaken to curb and reverse that trend and, where such programmes exist, it recommends that they should be made more systematic.

331. The Committee notes with concern that illiteracy rates among women are very high and it stresses the importance of focusing on educating women so that they can exercise their rights as citizens.

332. The Committee recommends that particular attention be paid to literacy programmes and that they be implemented in a sustained manner and it requests that information on progress made in that area be included in the next report.

333. The Committee expresses concern at the situation of women in the employment area and it draws attention to the need for programmes and projects designed to increase the access of the working female population in the labour force and to increase the number of women in all occupational categories, since they are currently concentrated mainly in commerce, services and jobs where the pay is extremely low. Many women are underpaid and they are paid less than men for work of equal value.

334. The Committee recommends that greater efforts be made to achieve the principles of equal pay and equal pay for work of equal value, to educate women so as to enable them to enter the labour force, to provide training and re-training programmes so as to encourage women to gain access to non-traditional jobs, to guarantee their right to social security and thus to ensure that women are able to be active agents in the development of the country.

335. The Committee notes with concern the high percentage of women heads of household in Peru and the need for systematic programmes to meet the needs of such women.

336. The Committee requests information on the outcome of the efforts made in that sector.

337. The Committee notes with concern that maternal and infant mortality and teenage pregnancy rates are high and that preventable diseases are common, all of which contributed to serious flaws in the Peruvian health system. It notes that the main factor which affected women primarily in the most disadvantaged sectors is lack of resources to avail themselves of medical care when needed and with the necessary speed.

338. The Committee recommends that all efforts be made so that such women may exercise their right to health and receive proper care and the necessary information from medical and paramedical personnel as part of basic respect for their human rights.

339. The Committee notes with concern that there is a close link between the number of abortions performed and the high maternal mortality rate, and it stresses that criminalizing abortion does not discourage abortions, but rather has the effect of making the procedure unsafe and dangerous for women.

340. The Committee recommends that the Government of Peru review its law on abortion and ensure that women have access to full and complete health services, which include safe abortion, and to emergency medical attention when complications arise from abortions. The Committee also requests that information be included in the next periodic report on the implementation of these measures and on the health services that are available to women who need emergency medical attention as a result of complications arising as a result of abortion.

341. The Committee expresses concern at the lack of information and lack of access to adequate contraception among poor women in urban and rural areas, indigenous women and teenage girls.

342. The Committee recommends the establishment of family planning programmes that emphasize sex education, use of adequate contraception and responsible use of sterilization services where necessary, with the patient's express authorization and after the consequences of such procedure had been fully explained.

343. The Committee recommends the implementation of programmes to prevent cervical and breast cancer, which are also major causes of mortality among women, and programmes to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, as well as to treat this disease.

344. Despite the support given by Peru to microcredit, the report does not describe activities in this area, which are extremely important and necessary in order to improve the status of women living in poverty, primarily in rural areas.

345. The Committee requests that the next report contain an account of the results of the programmes implemented by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Human Development, other government bodies and non-governmental organizations, and also statistics comparing the situation of women with that of men and comparing the situation in the period covered by the next report with that in the period covered by the present report.

346. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Peru of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Peru, and particularly Government administrators and politicians aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps that are required in that regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

Republic of Korea

347. The Committee considered the third and fourth periodic reports of the Republic of Korea (CEDAW/C/KOR/3 and CEDAW/C/KOR/4) at its 400th and 401st meetings, on 7 July 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR. 400 and 401).

Introduction by the State party

348. The representative noted that the fourth report had been produced by a consultative body, comprising representatives from 25 non-governmental organizations, and by 7 women's policy specialists and that the Republic of Korea had ratified the amendment to article 20 of the Convention in August 1996.

349. The representative stated that ratification of the Convention had impacted significantly on the lives of Korean women. The comments of the Committee members on the second report in 1993 had provided substantial guidance in implementing women's policies, particularly in respect to women's participation in decision-making and the elimination of gender-discriminatory laws relating to citizenship.

350. The representative described several major legal reforms, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1987, the Mother-Child Welfare Act 1991, the 1993 Punishment of Sexual Violence and Protection of the Victim Act, the 1995 Women's Development Act and the 1997 Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of the Victim Act. Amendments to the Nationality Act had been enacted in 1997 and the Republic of Korea's reservations to article 9 would soon be withdrawn.

351. The representative described Government efforts to make the Convention widely known, including a 1994 symposium observing the tenth anniversary of the country's ratification of the Convention, and the publication o annotations to the Convention in 1996.

352. The representative noted that, since February 1998, th Government had made it a policy priority to promot women's rights as an integral part of human rights. It ha established the Presidential Commission on Women' Affairs and had introduced the Master Plan in Women' Policies (1998–2002), which aimed to increase th participation of women in all sectors of Korean society. Th

Government also planned to increase the ratio of women in Governmental committees to 30 per cent by the year 2002.

353. The representative noted the significant impact of the Fourth World Conference on Women and that the Beijing Platform for Action actively contributed to the further empowerment of women. In follow-up to the Conference, the Government had identified ten policy priorities for the advancement of women, including the expansion of child-care facilities, the upgrade of child-care services, and the establishment of a women's information network.

354. The representative emphasized that increased participation by women in politics was a prerequisite for the enhancement of women's social status and further democratic development of the society. A female public employee target system had been instituted in 1995 to facilitate the recruitment of a prescribed number of women into the public sector each year and ratios of women employees were expected to rise from 10 per cent in 1996 to 20 per cent by the year 2000.

355. The representative noted the impact of the economic crisis and its potential adverse affects on Korean women, particularly low-income female-headed households, and indicated that the Government intended to increase its efforts to provide a safety net for these families and prevent the breakdown of the family unit. It also intended to strengthen its programmes to enhance women's economic activities.

356. The representative indicated that gender equality in recruitment, placement and promotion had not been realized and that, while laws and regulations designed to achieve equal employment were already in place, the entry of women into the workforce had not proceeded as rapidly as expected.

357. In concluding her presentation, the representative stated that, although Confucian ideology still hindered the complete realization of gender equality, it was a matter of time before the traditions of the past would give way to full gender equality, representative democracy and shared prosperity. She expressed confidence that, with the benefit of equal protection under the law, Korean women would emerge as contributing partners in the process of nation-building and write their own chapter in the global gender-equality renaissance of the twenty-first century.

Concluding comments by the Committee

Introduction

358. The Committee welcomes the high-level delegation of the Republic of Korea and commends the Government for its reports and particularly the well-structured and comprehensive fourth periodic report, which generally complied with the Committee's guidelines, and provides a broad range of information and data on the situation of women in Korea and the political will of the Government to advance the status of women. The Committee appreciates the exhaustive replies of the Government to questions posed by experts which amplified the written reports. The Committee also appreciates the input of non-governmental organizations to the preparation of the reports.

Positive aspects

359. The Committee welcomes the definitive steps taken by the Government towards the advancement of women and the measures taken to integrate a gender perspective into policies and programmes.

360. The Committee welcomes the establishment and strengthening of the proactive national machinery for women, in particular, the Presidential Commission on Women's Affairs.

361. The Committee welcomes the Government's close collaboration with non-governmental organizations to combat domestic violence through the introduction of protective legislation, in addition to the creation of sexual and domestic violence prevention and victim protection centres, emergency shelters and awareness-raising campaigns to encourage the reporting of and official response to domestic violence and other forms of sexual harassment.

362. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the Government's efforts to implement the Beijing Platform for Action through the preparation of a national plan for the advancement of women and identification of ten priorities in that respect. The Committee commends the 1995 enactment of the Women's Development Act and the Women's Development Fund endowed with US$ 70 million to support the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Women's Development Plan.

363. The Committee notes with appreciation the adoption and revision of numerous laws and legal provisions in order to bring domestic legislation in line with the Convention, in particular, the 1998 Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, Protection of the Victim Act and the 1995 Law for the Advancement of Women, which aims to address the issues of gender equality in a comprehensive way. The Committee welcomes the amendments of the National Act in 1997 and the news that the Government is considering the withdrawal of its reservation to article 9 of the Convention.

364. The Committee commends the Government on a wide range of policies, strategies and measures in social and economic areas and underlines, in particular, the

achievements in the area of education, including the introduction of non-traditional career orientation for women.

365. The Committee commends the fact that discrimination against women is defined in a number of articles of the constitution, as well as the Equal Opportunity Act 1989. It also commends the fact that maternity benefits for working women and preferential benefits for specific classes of workers for the purpose of redressing discriminatory conditions is not viewed as discriminatory.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

366. The Committee notes the negative impact of the economic crisis, and particularly the policies and positions of the International Monetary Fund, which are aggravating the situation for Korean women.

367. The Committee notes the persistence of entrenched paternalistic male values and traditional stereotyping of women's role. In spite of amendments to the civil code, discriminatory provisions remained, such as the prohibition of marriages between individuals with common surnames.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

368. The Committee is concerned with the reservations entered by the Government of Korea to the Convention.

369. The Committee urges the Government to review its reservations to the Convention with a view to their withdrawal before the year 2000.

370. The Committee is concerned that the reports contain insufficient information on the actual impact of laws and policies on women's lives.

371. The Committee recommends that subsequent reports provide detailed information on the implementation and enforcement of laws and policies. The Committee also recommends that subsequent reports include a comparative analysis of the progress achieved since the previous reports through, *inter alia*, statistical data disaggregated by sex.

372. The Committee notes with concern that, although the constitution contains a definition of discrimination the definition does not include discrimination with both the purpose or effect as specified in article 1 of the Convention. The Committee also notes that the Equal Opportunity Act 1989 does not include a full definition of discrimination, which also includes discrimination on the basis of religious beliefs, political preferences, age or disability.

373. The Committee recommends the inclusion in the constitution and all relevant legislation of a definition of discrimination which reflects that in article 1 of the Convention. It also recommends that the Government disseminate information, ensure the provision of legal ai and undertake all necessary measures to increase leg literacy among women. The Committee also recommend that the establishment of the National Human Righ Commission be expedited and the provision of remedies fo discriminatory practices.

374. The Committee is concerned that violence agains women is still pervasive in Korean society.

375. The Committee recommends that the Governme intensify its efforts to combat violence against wome through, *inter alia*, the introduction of comprehensi measures, including gender-sensitive training of th judiciary, health personnel and law enforcement official It also recommends the provision of adequate shelters an the incorporation of models of non-violent forms of confli resolution in education and the media.

376. The Committee is concerned about the unde representation of women in politics and decision-makin structures, including the judicial system. It emphasizes th importance of fostering a political environment conduci to women's promotion in all sectors of public and priva life.

377. The Committee recommends the provision of mo governmental support in order to increase women's politic participation and political education, raise public awarene about women leaders, continue promoting targets an quotas, introduce incentives to encourage a minimum quo of 30 per cent representation of women in political parti and the drafting of policies to increase the participation women in the judicial system. It also recommends that th Government encourage the private sector to introduce quot for women, particularly in non-traditional areas.

378. The Committee is concerned about the situation women in the labour market and emphasizes the curre Asian economic crisis and its impact on the situation women. The Committee raises the following concerns:

(a) Sexual harassment in the workplace;

(b) Insufficient social protection of female worke in the private sector;

(c) Occupational segregation, includi concentration in traditional female occupations;

(d) Lack of employment opportunities for hig qualified women, as well as the wage differential betw women and men;

(e) Insufficient support to women entreprene particularly in non-traditional areas;

(f) Situation of women in agriculture, especiall elderly women and in rural areas;

(g) Early lay-off and an increase in the number of part-time women workers.

379. The Committee recommends:

(a) Provision of statistical data on the growing number of part-time workers in social protection schemes;

(b) Implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and recognition of women's unpaid work;

(c) Provision of equal social protection for women in both the public and private sectors including extension of paid maternity leave to the private sector to bridge the gap between the working conditions in these sectors;

(d) Ratification of International Labour Organization conventions, especially Conventions 110 and 111;

(e) Elimination of gender-restrictive recruitment and advertisements;

(f) Awareness-raising campaigns and training programmes to encourage the reporting and elimination of sexual harassment in the workplace.

380. The Committee expresses concern at the situation of rural women, in particular in regard to their under-representation in decision-making/leading public and private positions.

381. The Committee encourages the Government to give full attention to the needs of rural women and to ensure that policies and programmes benefit them in all areas, including in regard to their recognition as agricultural workers, so as to benefit from the rights under the Employment Standard Act, and access to decision-making, health and social services. The Committee also recommends more studies on the situation of rural women, and the collection of statistical data to inform policies in this area. The Committee also recommends that the Government facilitate access to credit for rural women.

382. The Committee's further concerns include:

(a) The status and role of the national machinery, including the Commission on Women's Affairs, its authority and budget;

(b) The differential minimum age of marriage of women and men;

(c) The high rate of abortion;

(d) The discriminatory impact of existing inheritance laws;

(e) The provision of inadequate information on the numbers of women using health facilities, especially those with HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, in the report.

383. The Committee recommends that the Government of Korea provide further information in its next periodic report describing measures taken to address these concerns.

384. The Committee recommends that the Government give special attention to the realization of the right to social security provided by the 1955 Unemployment Insurance Scheme to disabled women, and that the policy to provide a variety of programmes for older women, including the promotion of their health, not be jeopardized by the present economic crisis.

385. The Committee recommends that that special attention be given by the Government, and if necessary special measures be introduced, to prevent adverse consequences for women as a result of the present economic crisis.

386. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in the Republic of Korea of the present concluding comments in order to make the Korean people, and particularly the Government, administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in that regard. The Committee also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

Chapter V

Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

387. The Committee considered ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (agenda item 7) at its 384th and 403rd meetings, on 22 June and 10 July 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.384 and 403).

388. The item was introduced by the Chief of the Women's Rights Unit of the Division for the Advancement of Women, who introduced the report of the secretariat (CEDAW/C/1998/II/4) and a working paper containing draft rules of procedures (CEDAW/C/1997/WG.I/WP.1).

Action taken by the Committee on the report of Working Group I

389. At its 403rd meeting on 10 July 1998, the Committee considered the item on the basis of the report of Working

Group I (CEDAW/C/1998/II/WG.I/WP.1) and took the following decisions.

1. Pre-session working group

390. In the light of decision 19/1 on the pre-session working group, the Committee decided that the pre-session working group for the twenty-first session should be treated in the same way as all other pre-session working groups, especially in regard to input from the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

391. The Committee also decided to continue the current practice of assigning three members, including the designated country rapporteur, to prepare questions relating to periodic reports to guide the pre-session working group whenever it meets as it draws up the list of questions and issues with respect to periodic reports. The three members should be drawn from different regions.

2. Receipt of reports by experts

392. The Committee decided that the secretariat should make its best efforts to ensure early receipt of reports, including through the use of electronic means of communication.

3. Follow-up to the Committee decision 18/III

393. The Committee decided that its decision 18/III, prohibiting the participation of members of the Committee in the consideration of the reports of countries of which they are nationals, should be made widely known, and, in particular, to States parties whose nationals are members of the Committee at the time these States parties are presenting their reports. The Committee decided that the Chairperson of the Committee should make this decision, as well as the procedures of the Committee, known to new experts.

4. The Guidelines of the Human Rights Committee

394. The Committee decided that the Guidelines of the Human Rights Committee for the exercise of functions by members should be discussed by Working Group I at the twentieth session of the Committee in January 1999, if the programme of work of the Committee permits.

5. Concluding comments

395. The Committee decided to streamline those parts of the Committee's concluding comments relating to "factors and difficulties" and "positive aspects", while retaining flexibility in this regard. The sections relating to "principal areas of concern" and "recommendations and suggestions" of the Committee's concluding comments should be combined in a single section to be entitled "principal areas of concern and recommendations".

396. Where appropriate, the Committee's concluding comments should include specific suggestions to the States parties with regard to obtaining technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other parts of the United Nations system. Recommendations relating to technical assistance could, for example, be directed to reservations and law reform, including review of legislation.

397. The Committee adopted the following procedures and format for the elaboration of concluding comments:

(a) The Committee designates from among its members a country rapporteur for the report of each State party;

(b) Assisted by the secretariat, the country rapporteur seeks additional information on the situation of women in the State party under review. The findings of the country rapporteur are presented as a briefing on the report at a closed meeting before the State party's presentation. In the case of periodic reports, the rapporteur's report is sent in advance to the pre-session working group;[1]

(c) The Committee holds a closed meeting after the constructive dialogue to consider the main issues and trends to be reflected in the concluding comments relating to the report of the State party. Concluding comments drafted thereafter reflect only the views expressed at the meetings during which the report is presented, and not the views of the individual country rapporteurs;

(d) The expert nominated as the country rapporteur drafts concluding comments in close collaboration with the general rapporteur of the Committee and with the support of the secretariat;

(e) Concluding comments are preceded by a summary of the State party's presentation, which is prepared by the secretariat;

(f) Concluding comments usually follow a standard format under four headings: introduction; positive aspects; factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention; principal areas of concern and recommendations;

(g) The introduction contains comments on whether the report has followed the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of initial and periodic reports; whether it was sufficient or insufficient; whether it incorporates or refers to statistical information disaggregated by sex; and the Committee's general recommendations. Whether there are any reservations to the Convention; whether reservations have been withdrawn; whether the State party has objected to the reservations of other State parties; and whether the State party has mentioned the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action are issues which are addressed in this section, as well as the nature and relevance of the oral presentation. An objective indication of the strengths of the report and the strength of the delegation is generally included;

(h) The "positive aspects" section is organized in the order of the articles of the Convention;

(i) The "factors and difficulties" section describes major overarching reasons why the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has not been implemented fully by the State party. Any reservations to the Convention are also addressed in this section,[2] as well as other legal impediments to the implementation of the Convention;

(j) The "principal areas of concern and recommendations" section is organized in the order of the importance of the particular issues to the country under review and provides concrete proposals from the Committee on the problems identified in the rest of the comments;

(k) The concluding comments include reference to any commitments of the State party made at the Fourth World Conference on Women;

(l) Where appropriate, the concluding comments include specific suggestions to the States parties with regard to possible technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other parts of the United Nations system. Recommendations relating to technical assistance could, for example, be directed to reservations, review of legislation and law reform;

(m) Concluding comments close with a recommendation relating to dissemination, requesting the wide dissemination of the concluding comments in the State party concerned, in order to make the people in the State party, and particularly its government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in that regard. It also requests the State party to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action;

(n) Each concluding comment is internally balanced, and the Committee strives to achieve consistence and balance, particularly in terms of praise and expressions of concern, among the concluding comments elaborated at each session. Accordingly, the Committee considers concluding comments comparatively in an effort to ensure that they are even.

6. Enforceability of the Convention in domestic legal systems

398. The Committee requested that the secretariat prepare a study on enforceability of the Convention in domestic legal systems for the information of the Committee to be submitted to its twenty-first session.

7. Reports to be considered at future sessions

399. The Committee decided that it would consider the following reports at its twentieth, twenty-first and twenty-second sessions:

Twentieth session

Initial reports

Algeria
Jordan
Liechtenstein

Second periodic reports

Chile
Greece
Thailand

Third periodic reports

Austria
China, including Hong Kong
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Fourth periodic reports

Colombia

In the event that one of the above-mentioned States parties should be unable to present its report, the Committee will consider the third periodic reports of Belarus or Spain.

Twenty-first session

Initial reports

Democratic Republic of the Congo
Belize
Georgia

Second periodic reports

Ireland

Third periodic reports

Egypt
Germany
Spain

In the event that one of the above-mentioned States parties should be unable to present its report, the Committee will consider the fourth periodic report of Sweden.

Twenty-second session

Initial reports

[to be submitted]

Second periodic reports

Burkina Faso
Equatorial Guinea
Uruguay

Third periodic reports

Belarus
Luxembourg
Finland

Fourth periodic reports

Sweden

In the event that one of the above-mentioned States parties should be unable to present its report, the Committee will consider the fourth periodic report of Denmark.

8. Members of the pre-session working groups for the twentieth and twenty-first sessions

400. The Committee decided that the members of the pre-session working group for the twentieth session and their alternates should be:

Members

Ms. Emna Aouij (Africa)
Ms. Ivanka Corti (Europe)
Ms. Salma Khan (Asia)
Ms. Yolande Ferrer (Latin America)

Alternates

Ms. Charlotte Abaka (Africa)
Ms. H. B. Schöpp-Schilling (Europe)
Ms. Chikako Taya (Asia)
Ms. Aída González (Latin America and the Caribbean)

The Committee decided that the members of the pre-session working group for the twenty-first session and thei alternates should be:

Members

Ms. Charlotte Abaka (Africa)
Ms. H. B. Schöpp-Schilling (Europe)
Ms. Yung-Chung Kim (Asia)
Ms. Aída González (Latin America and the Caribbean)

Alternate

Ms. Kongit Sinegiorgis (Africa)
Ms. Feride Acar (Europe)
Ms. Savitri Goonersekere (Asia)
Ms. Rosalyn Hazelle (Latin America and the Caribbean)

9. Dates of the twentieth session of the Committee

401. Consistent with the calendar of conferences for 1998 the twentieth session should be held from 18 January to 5 February 1999. The pre-session working group for the twentieth session will meet from 11 to 15 January 1999.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/52/38/Rev.1), part II, para. 469.

[2] At its thirteenth session, the Committee agreed that for those States parties that have entered substantive reservations to the Convention, it would include, in the concluding comments it prepares following the review of their reports, a section in which the Committee's views would be reflected: *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/49/38), chap. I, sect. C, para. 10.

Chapter VI
Implementation of article 21 of the Convention

402. The Committee considered the implementation of article 21 of the Convention (agenda item 6) at its 384th and 403rd meetings, on 22 June and 10 July 1998 (see CEDAW/C/SR.403).

403. The item was presented by the Deputy Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, who introduced the following documents:

(a) Draft general recommendation on article 12 of the Convention (CEDAW/C/1998/I/WG.II/WP.3 and Add.1 and 2);

(b) Working paper containing a draft of the contribution of the Committee to the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (CEDAW/C/1998/WG.II/WP.2);

(c) Note by the Secretary-General on reports of the specialized agencies on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities (CEDAW/C/1998/II/3 and Add.4).

Action taken by the Committee on the report of Working Group II

404. At its 403rd meeting, on 10 July 1998, the Committee took the following action on the basis of the report of Working Group II (CEDAW/C/1998/WG.II/WP.1/Rev.2 and CEDAW/C/1998/II/WG.II/WP.2) (see CEDAW/C/SR.403).

1. Revised text on reservations

405. The Committee adopted the revised text on reservations as a contribution to the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. Draft general recommendation on article 12

406. The Committee agreed that the secretariat should make the text in CEDAW/C/1998/II/WG.II/WP.2 available to Committee members, along with an annex containing proposals for amendment. Members may wish to submit comments to the secretariat by no later than 1 October 1998 to enable a further discussion and adoption of a full text to take place at the twentieth session of the Committee in January 1999.

3. Statement on the indivisibility of civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights and the centrality of gender awareness to the enjoyment of those rights

407. At their ninth meeting, the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies took note of a proposal by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women that that Committee, along with the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights consider issuing a joint statement on the indivisibility of civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights and the centrality of gender awareness to the enjoyment of those rights as part of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (report of the ninth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies: A/53/125, para. 35).

408. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted the following statement for consideration and possible adoption by the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:

> The principle of indivisibility of all human rights is a fundamental underpinning of the international consensus on human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishes the canon of rights and freedoms to which all human beings are entitled. These rights, and their indivisibility, have been reiterated in international human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The World Conference on Human Rights held in 1993 underscored the interdependence of all human rights and emphasized that all societies should work to ensure the enjoyment by all their members of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including their right to development.
>
> The principle of the equal rights of women and men is one of the pillars of the United Nations, reflected in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all subsequent major international human rights instruments, this principle is elaborated in the

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Convention codifies women's right to non-discrimination and equality with men and also establishes that women and men are equally entitled to the full enjoyment and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. In so doing it reflects the principle of indivisibility of rights.

The two Covenants are premised on the entitlement of all human beings, without distinction based on sex, to the rights in these instruments. They also oblige States parties to ensure the equal entitlement of women and men to the enjoyment of these rights.

The 1990s have been characterized by a growing understanding of the interdependence between human rights and fundamental freedoms, sustainable development, and democracy. This decade has also witnessed renewed emphasis on women's entitlement to assert and exercise their human rights. The achievement of equality is no longer seen solely, or primarily, as the responsibility of women, but is increasingly recognized as a societal responsibility and a legal obligation assumed by States parties to international human rights instruments.

The centrality of gender equality in the full enjoyment of human rights is reshaping the way in which the scope and content of human rights and the resulting obligations for implementation are understood.

The Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recognize their critical role in increasing the understanding of gender factors in the enjoyment of human rights. They are conscious of the need to interpret creatively the human rights norms they monitor so that they can be applied to those experiences of women which differ from those of men. The Committees underline that a broader, inclusive understanding of such rights brings with it an international legal obligation for States parties to ensure to women the full enjoyment of all their human rights.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women provides leadership, within the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, in the elaboration of a human rights concept that takes gender into account. The Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights increasingly consider the impact of gender on the enjoyment of rights protected under the two Covenants, in the consideration of the reports of States parties, in concluding comments and general comments and recommendations.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reaffirm their individual and joint responsibility to contribute to the enjoyment of all human rights by all members of society, as foreseen in the Declaration upon which they are based. To that end, they pledge to increase their efforts to assess factors and obstacles that impinge on women's enjoyment of their civil, political, economic, social, cultural and other rights and to suggest specific actions on how such obstacles might be overcome so that full enjoyment of human rights by all, without discrimination, may be realized.

4. Report of Ms. Silvia Cartwright, resource person appointed by the Committee to attend the open-ended working group on the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women held in parallel with the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women

409. At its 392nd meeting on 30 June 1998, Ms. Silvia Cartwright, the resource person appointed by the Committee to attend the open-ended working group on the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention reported that significant progress had been made by the working group when it met during the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 1998.

410. She noted, however, that several important issues remained to be determined. These included the extent to which groups may lodge communications on behalf of women or groups of women suffering violations of their rights under the Convention or where States parties have failed to comply with Convention obligations and whether reservations to the optional protocol will be permitted.

411. She urged experts to familiarize themselves with the text of the draft optional protocol and to support and encourage the adoption of an instrument which is as strong or stronger than other human rights communications procedures.

Chapter VII
Provisional agenda for the twentieth session

412. The Committee considered the provisional agenda for its twentieth session (agenda item 8) at its 403rd meeting, on 10 July 1998. The Committee decided to approve the following provisional agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Solemn declaration by the new members of the Committee.
3. Election of officers.
4. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
5. Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the nineteenth and twentieth session of the Committee.
6. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
7. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
8. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.
9. Provisional agenda for the twenty-first session.
10. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its twentieth session.

Chapter VIII
Adoption of the report

413. At its 403rd meeting, on 10 July 1998, the Committee adopted the report on its nineteenth session (CEDAW/C/1998/II/L.1 and Add.1-9), as orally amended.

Annex I

States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as at 10 July 1998

States parties	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession	Date of entry into force
Albania	11 May 1994[a]	10 June 1994
Algeria	22 May 1996[a,b]	21 June 1996
Andorra	15 January 1997[a]	14 February 1997
Angola	17 September 1986[a]	17 October 1986
Antigua and Barbuda	1 August 1989[a]	31 August 1989
Argentina	15 July 1985[b]	14 August 1985
Armenia	13 September 1993[a]	13 October 1993
Australia	28 July 1983[b]	27 August 1983
Austria	31 March 1982[b]	30 April 1982
Azerbaijan	10 July 1995[a]	9 August 1995
Bahamas	6 October 1993[a]	5 November 1993
Bangladesh	6 November 1984[a,b]	6 December 1984
Barbados	16 October 1980	3 September 1981
Belarus	4 February 1981[c]	3 September 1981
Belgium	10 July 1985[b]	9 August 1985
Belize	16 May 1990	15 June 1990
Benin	12 March 1992	11 April 1992
Bhutan	31 August 1981	30 September 1981
Bolivia	8 June 1990	8 July 1990
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 September 1993[d]	1 October 1993
Botswana	13 August 1996[a]	12 September 1996
Brazil	1 February 1984[b]	2 March 1984
Bulgaria	8 February 1982[c]	10 March 1982
Burkina Faso	14 October 1987[a]	13 November 1987
Burundi	8 January 1992	7 February 1992
Cambodia	15 October 1992[a]	14 November 1992
Cameroon	23 August 1994[a]	22 September 1994
Canada	10 December 1981[c]	9 January 1982
Cape Verde	5 December 1980[a]	3 September 1981
Central African Republic	21 June 1991[a]	21 July 1991
Chad	9 June 1995[a]	9 July 1995
Chile	7 December 1989	6 January 1990
China	4 November 1980[b]	3 September 1981
Colombia	19 January 1982	18 February 1982
Comoros	31 October 1994[a]	30 November 1994
Congo	26 July 1982	25 August 1982
Costa Rica	4 April 1986	4 May 1986
Côte d'Ivoire	19 December 1995[a]	17 January 1996
Croatia	9 September 1992[d]	9 October 1992
Cuba	17 July 1980[b]	3 September 1981
Cyprus	23 July 1985[a,b]	22 August 1985
Czech Republic[e]	22 February 1993[c,d]	24 March 1993

States parties	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession	Date of entry into force
Democratic Republic of the Congo[f]	17 October 1986	16 November 1986
Denmark	21 April 1983	21 May 1983
Dominica	15 September 1980	3 September 1981
Dominican Republic	2 September 1982	2 October 1982
Ecuador	9 November 1981	9 December 1981
Egypt	18 September 1981[b]	18 October 1981
El Salvador	19 August 1981[b]	18 September 1981
Equatorial Guinea	23 October 1984[a]	22 November 1984
Eritrea	5 September 1995[a]	5 October 1995
Estonia	21 October 1991[a]	20 November 1991
Ethiopia	10 September 1981[b]	10 October 1981
Fiji	28 August 1995[a,b]	27 September 1995
Finland	4 September 1986	4 October 1986
France	14 December 1983[b,c]	13 January 1984
Gabon	21 January 1983	20 February 1983
Gambia	16 April 1993	16 May 1993
Georgia	26 October 1994[a]	25 November 1994
Germany[g]	10 July 1985[b]	9 August 1985
Ghana	2 January 1986	1 February 1986
Greece	7 June 1983	7 July 1983
Grenada	30 August 1990	29 September 1990
Guatemala	12 August 1982	11 September 1982
Guinea	9 August 1982	8 September 1982
Guinea-Bissau	23 August 1985	22 September 1985
Guyana	17 July 1980	3 September 1981
Haiti	20 July 1981	3 September 1981
Honduras	3 March 1983	2 April 1983
Hungary	22 December 1980[c]	3 September 1981
Iceland	18 June 1985	18 July 1985
India	9 July 1993[b]	8 August 1993
Indonesia	13 September 1984[b]	13 October 1984
Iraq	13 August 1986[a,b]	12 September 1986
Ireland	23 December 1985[a,b,c]	22 January 1986
Israel	3 October 1991[b]	2 November 1991
Italy	10 June 1985[b]	10 July 1985
Jamaica	19 October 1984[b]	18 November 1984
Japan	25 June 1985	25 July 1985
Jordan	1 July 1992[b]	31 July 1992
Kenya	9 March 1984[a]	8 April 1984
Kuwait	2 September 1994[a]	2 October 1994
Kyrgyzstan	10 February 1997[a]	12 March 1997
Lao People's Democratic Republic	14 August 1981	13 September 1981
Latvia	14 April 1992[a]	14 May 1992
Lebanon	21 April 1997[a,b]	21 May 1997

States parties	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession	Date of entry into force
Lesotho	22 August 1995[a,b]	21 September 1995
Liberia	17 July 1984[a]	16 August 1984
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	16 May 1989[a,b]	15 June 1989
Liechtenstein	22 December 1995[a,c]	21 January 1996
Lithuania	18 January 1994[a]	17 February 1994
Luxembourg	2 February 1989[b]	4 March 1989
Madagascar	17 March 1989	16 April 1989
Malawi	12 March 1987[a,c]	11 April 1987
Malaysia	5 July 1995[a,b]	4 August 1995
Maldives	1 July 1993[a,b]	31 July 1993
Mali	10 September 1985	10 October 1985
Malta	8 March 1991[a,b]	7 April 1991
Mauritius	9 July 1984[a,c]	8 August 1984
Mexico	23 March 1981[b]	3 September 1981
Mongolia	20 July 1981[c]	3 September 1981
Morocco	21 June 1993[a,b]	21 July 1993
Mozambique	16 April 1997[a]	16 May 1997
Myanmar	22 July 1997[a,b]	21 August 1997
Namibia	23 November 1992[a]	23 December 1992
Nepal	22 April 1991	22 May 1991
Netherlands	23 July 1991[b]	22 August 1991
New Zealand	10 January 1985[b,c]	9 February 1985
Nicaragua	27 October 1981	26 November 1981
Nigeria	13 June 1985	13 July 1985
Norway	21 May 1981	3 September 1981
Pakistan	12 March 1996[a,b]	11 April 1996
Panama	29 October 1981	28 November 1981
Papua New Guinea	12 January 1995[a]	11 February 1995
Paraguay	6 April 1987[a]	6 May 1987
Peru	13 September 1982	13 October 1982
Philippines	5 August 1981	4 September 1981
Poland	30 July 1980[c]	3 September 1981
Portugal	30 July 1980	3 September 1981
Republic of Korea	27 December 1984[b,c]	26 January 1985
Republic of Moldova	1 July 1994[a]	31 July 1994
Romania	7 January 1982[b]	6 February 1982
Russian Federation	23 January 1981[c]	3 September 1981
Rwanda	2 March 1981	3 September 1981
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 April 1985[a]	25 May 1985
Saint Lucia	8 October 1982[a]	7 November 1982
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	4 August 1981[a]	3 September 1981
Samoa	25 September 1992[a]	25 October 1992
Senegal	5 February 1985	7 March 1985
Seychelles	5 May 1992[a]	4 June 1992
Sierra Leone	11 November 1988	11 December 1988

States parties	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession	Date of entry into force
Singapore	5 October 1995[a,b]	4 November 1995
Slovakia[e]	28 May 1993[c,d]	27 June 1993
Slovenia	6 July 1992[d]	5 August 1992
South Africa	15 December 1995[a]	14 January 1996
Spain	5 January 1984[b]	4 February 1984
Sri Lanka	5 October 1981	4 November 1981
Suriname	1 March 1993[a]	31 March 1993
Sweden	2 July 1980	3 September 1981
Switzerland	27 March 1997[a]	26 April 1997
Tajikistan	26 October 1993[a]	25 November 1993
Thailand	9 August 1985[a,b,c]	8 September 1985
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	18 January 1994[d]	17 February 1994
Togo	26 September 1983[a]	26 October 1983
Trinidad and Tobago	12 January 1990[b]	11 February 1990
Tunisia	20 September 1985[b]	20 October 1985
Turkey	20 December 1985[a,b]	19 January 1986
Turkmenistan	1 May 1997[a]	31 May 1997
Uganda	22 July 1985	21 August 1985
Ukraine	12 March 1981[c]	3 September 1981
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 April 1986[b]	7 May 1986
United Republic of Tanzania	20 August 1985	19 September 1985
Uruguay	9 October 1981	8 November 1981
Uzbekistan	19 July 1995[a]	18 August 1995
Vanuatu	8 September 1995[a]	8 October 1995
Venezuela	2 May 1983[b]	1 June 1983
Viet Nam	17 February 1982[b]	19 March 1982
Yemen[h]	30 May 1984[a,b]	29 June 1984
Yugoslavia	26 February 1982	28 March 1982
Zambia	21 June 1985	21 July 1985
Zimbabwe	13 May 1991[a]	12 June 1991

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[a] Accession.

[b] Declarations and reservations.

[c] Reservation subsequently withdrawn.

[d] Succession.

[e] Before becoming separate States on 1 January 1993, the Czech Republic and Slovakia formed part of Czechoslovakia, which State had ratified the Convention on 16 February 1982.

[f] Effective 17 May 1997 Zaire was renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo.

[g] With effect from 3 October 1990, the German Democratic Republic (which ratified the Convention on 9 July 1980) and the Federal Republic of Germany (which ratified the Convention on 10 July 1985) united to form one sovereign State, which acts in the United Nations under the designation "Germany".

[h] On 22 May 1990 Democratic Yemen and Yemen merged to form a single State, which acts in the United Nations under the designation "Yemen".

Annex II

Membership of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Name of member	*Country of nationality*
Charlotte Abaka[*]	Ghana
Ayse Feride Acar[**]	Turkey
Emna Aouij[*]	Tunisia
Tendai Ruth Bare[*]	Zimbabwe
Desiree Patricia Bernard[*]	Guyana
Carlota Bustelo García del Real[**]	Spain
Silvia Rose Cartwright[**]	New Zealand
Miriam Yolanda Estrada Castillo[*]	Ecuador
Ivanka Corti[*]	Italy
Yolanda Ferrer Gómez[**]	Cuba
Aída González Martínez[**]	Mexico
Sunaryati Hartono[*]	Indonesia
Aurora Javate de Dios[*]	Philippines
Salma Khan[**]	Bangladesh
Yung-Chung Kim[**]	Republic of Korea
Lin Shangzhen[*]	China
Ahoua Ouedraogo[**]	Burkina Faso
Anne Lise Ryel[**]	Norway
Ginko Sato[*]	Japan
Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling[**]	Germany
Carmel Shalev[*]	Israel
Kongit Sinegiorgis[**]	Ethiopia
Mervat Tallawy[*]	Egypt

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[*] Term of office expires in 1998.

[**] Term of office expires in 2000.

Annex III

Documents before the Committee at its eighteenth and nineteenth sessions

A. Eighteenth session

Document number	*Title or description*
CEDAW/C/1998/I/1	Provisional agenda and annotations
CEDAW/C/1998/I/2	Report of the Secretary-General on the status of submission of reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention
CEDAW/C/1998/I/3	Note by the Secretary-General on reports of specialized agencies on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities
CEDAW/C/1998/I/4	Report of the Secretariat on ways and means of improving the work of the Committee
CEDAW/C/1998/I/CRP.1 and Add.1-4	Report of the pre-session working group
CEDAW/C/1998/I/INF.1/Rev.1	List of participants
CEDAW/C/1998/I/L.1 and Add.1-9	Draft report of the Committee
CEDAW/C/1998/I/WG.I/WP.1	Report of Working Group I
CEDAW/C/1998/I/WG.II/WP.1	Draft general recommendation on article 12
CEDAW/C/1998/I/WG.II/WP.2	Working paper on reservations
CEDAW/C/1998/I/WG.II/WP.3 and Add.1-2	Report of Working Group II
Reports of States parties	
CEDAW/C/AZE/1	Initial report of Azerbaijan
CEDAW/C/BGR/2-3	Combined second and third periodic reports of Bulgaria
CEDAW/C/CRO/1	Initial report of Croatia
CEDAW/C/CZE/1	Initial report of the Czech Republic
CEDAW/C/DOM/2-3	Combined second and third periodic reports of the Dominican Republic
CEDAW/C/DOM/4	Fourth periodic report of the Dominican Republic
CEDAW/C/IDN/2-3	Combined second and third periodic reports of Indonesia
CEDAW/C/MEX/3-4 and Add.1	Combined third and fourth periodic reports of Mexico
CEDAW/C/ZWE/1	Initial report of Zimbabwe

B. Nineteenth session

Document number	*Title or description*
CEDAW/C/1998/II/1	Provisional agenda and annotations
CEDAW/C/1998/II/2	Report of the Secretary-General on the status of submission of reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention
CEDAW/C/1998/II/3	Note by the Secretary-General on reports of specialized agencies on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities
CEDAW/C/1998/II/3/Add.1/ Part.1 and Part.2	Report of the Food and Agriculture Organization
CEDAW/C/1998/II/4	Report of the Secretariat on ways and means of improving the work of the Committee
CEDAW/C/1998/II/CRP.1 and Add.1-6	Report of the pre-session working group
CEDAW/C/1998/II/INF.1/Rev.1	List of participants
CEDAW/C/1998/II/L.1 and Add.1-9	Draft report of the Committee
CEDAW/C/1998/II/WG.I/WP.1	Report of Working Group I
CEDAW/C/1998/II/WG.II/WP.1/ Rev.1	Draft statement on reservations
CEDAW/C/1998/II/WG.II/WP.1/ Rev.2	Statement on reservations
CEDAW/C/1998/II/WG.II/WP.2	Draft general recommendation on article 12
CEDAW/C/1998/II/WG.II/WP.3	Report of Working Group II
Reports of States parties	
CEDAW/C/KOR/3	Third periodic report of the Republic of Korea
CEDAW/C/KOR/4	Fourth periodic report of the Republic of Korea
CEDAW/C/NZL/3-4 and Add.1	Combined third and fourth periodic reports of New Zealand
CEDAW/C/NGA/2-3	Combined second and third periodic reports of Nigeria
CEDAW/C/PAN/2-3	Combined second and third periodic reports of Panama
CEDAW/C/PER/3-4	Combined third and fourth periodic reports of Peru
CEDAW/C/SVK/1 and Add.1	Initial report of Slovakia
CEDAW/C/ZAF/1	Initial report of South Africa
CEDAW/C/TZA/2-3	Combined second and third periodic reports of the United Republic of Tanzania

Annex IV

Status of submission and consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as at 10 July 1998

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
A. Initial reports			
Albania	10 June 1995		
Algeria	21 June 1997		
Andorra	14 February 1998		
Angola	17 October 1987		
Antigua and Barbuda	31 August 1990	21 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Argentina	14 August 1986	6 October 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.39)	Seventh (1988)
Armenia	13 October 1994	30 November 1994 (CEDAW/C/ARM/1) 10 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/ARM/1/Corr.1)	Seventeenth (1997)
Australia	27 August 1984	3 October 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.40)	Seventh (1988)
Austria	30 April 1983	20 October 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.17)	Fourth (1985)
Azerbaijan	9 August 1996	11 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/AZE/1)	Eighteenth (1998)
Bahamas	5 November 1994		
Bangladesh	6 December 1985	12 March 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.34)	Sixth (1987)
Barbados	3 September 1982	11 April 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.64)	Eleventh (1992)
Belarus	3 September 1982	4 October 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.5)	Second (1983)
Belgium	9 August 1986	20 July 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.53)	Eighth (1989)
Belize	15 June 1991	19 June 1996 (CEDAW/C/BLZ/1-2)	
Benin	11 April 1993		
Bhutan	30 September 1982		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Bolivia	8 July 1991	8 July 1991 (CEDAW/C/BOL/1) 26 August 1993 (CEDAW/C/BOL/1/Add.1)	Fourteenth (1995)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 October 1994		
Botswana	12 September 1997		
Brazil	2 March 1985		
Bulgaria	10 March 1983	13 June 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.15)	Fourth (1985)
Burkina Faso	13 November 1988	24 May 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.67)	Tenth (1991)
Burundi	7 February 1993		
Cambodia	14 November 1993		
Cameroon	22 September 1995		
Canada	9 January 1983	15 July 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.16)	Fourth (1985)
Cape Verde	3 September 1982		
Central African Republic	21 July 1992		
Chad	9 July 1996		
Chile	6 January 1991	3 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/CHI/1)	Fourteenth (1995)
China	3 September 1982	25 May 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.14)	Third (1984)
Colombia	18 February 1983	16 January 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.32)	Sixth (1987)
Comoros	30 November 1995		
Congo	25 August 1983		
Costa Rica	4 May 1987		
Côte d'Ivoire	17 January 1997		
Croatia	9 October 1993	10 January 1995 (CEDAW/C/CRO/1)	Eighteenth (1998)
Cuba	3 September 1982	27 September 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.4)	Second (1983)
Cyprus	22 August 1986	2 February 1994 (CEDAW/C/CYP/1-2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Czech Republic	24 March 1994	30 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/CZE/1)	Eighteenth (1998)
Democratic Republic of the Congo[e]	16 November 1987	1 March 1994 (CEDAW/C/ZAR/1)	
Denmark	21 May 1984	30 July 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.22)	Fifth (1986)
Dominica	3 September 1982		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Dominican Republic	2 October 1983	2 May 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.37)	Seventh (1988)
Ecuador	9 December 1982	14 August 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.23)	Fifth (1986)
Egypt	18 October 1982	2 February 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.10)	Third (1984)
El Salvador	18 September 1982	3 November 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.19)	Fifth (1986)
Equatorial Guinea	22 November 1985	16 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.50)	Eighth (1989)
Eritrea	5 October 1996		
Estonia	20 November 1992		
Ethiopia	10 October 1982	22 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3) 16 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Fiji	27 September 1996		
Finland	4 October 1987	16 February 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.56)	Eighth (1989)
France	13 January 1985	13 February 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.33)	Sixth (1987)
Gabon	20 February 1984	19 June 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.54)	Eighth (1989)
Gambia	16 May 1994		
Georgia	25 November 1995	9 March 1998 (CEDAW/C/GEO/1)	
Germany	9 August 1986	15 September 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.59)	Ninth (1990)
Ghana	1 February 1987	29 January 1991 (CEDAW/C/GHA/1-2)	Eleventh (1992)
Greece	7 July 1984	5 April 1985 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.28)	Sixth (1987)
Grenada	29 September 1991		
Guatemala	11 September 1983	2 April 1991 (CEDAW/C/GUA/1-2 and Corr.1) 7 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/GUA/1-2/Amend.1)	Thirteenth (1994) Thirteenth (1994)
Guinea	8 September 1983		
Guinea-Bissau	22 September 1986		
Guyana	3 September 1982	23 January 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.63)	Thirteenth (1994)
Haiti	3 September 1982		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Honduras	2 April 1984	3 December 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.44)	Eleventh (1992)
Hungary	3 September 1982	20 September 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.3)	Third (1984)
Iceland	18 July 1986	5 May 1993 (CEDAW/C/ICE/1-2)	Fifteenth (1996)
India	8 August 1994		
Indonesia	13 October 1985	17 March 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.36)	Seventh (1988)
Iraq	12 September 1987	16 May 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.66/Rev.1)	Twelfth (1993)
Ireland	22 January 1987	18 February 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.47)	Eighth (1989)
Israel	2 November 1992	12 January 1994 b/ 7 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/ISR/1-2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Italy	10 July 1986	20 October 1989 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.62)	Tenth (1991)
Jamaica	18 November 1985	12 September 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.38)	Seventh (1988)
Japan	25 July 1986	13 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.48)	Seventh (1988)
Jordan	31 July 1993	27 October 1997 (CEDAW/C/JOR/1)	
Kenya	8 April 1985	4 December 1990 (CEDAW/C/KEN/1-2)	Twelfth (1993)
Kuwait	1 October 1995		
Kyrgyzstan	12 March 1998		
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1982		
Latvia	14 May 1993		
Lebanon	21 May 1998		
Lesotho	21 September 1996		
Liberia	16 August 1985		
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	15 June 1990	18 February 1991 (CEDAW/C/LIB/1) 4 October 1993 (CEDAW/C/LIB/1/Add.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Liechtenstein	21 January 1997	4 August 1997 (CEDAW/C/LIE/1)	
Lithuania	17 February 1995	4 June 1998 (CEDAW/C/LTU/1)	
Luxembourg	4 March 1990	13 November 1996 (CEDAW/C/LUX/1)	Seventeenth (1997)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Madagascar	16 April 1990	21 May 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.65) 8 November 1993 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.65/Rev.2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Malawi	11 April 1988	15 July 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.58)	Ninth (1990)
Malaysia	4 August 1996		
Maldives	1 July 1994		
Mali	10 October 1986	13 November 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.43)	Seventh (1988)
Malta	7 April 1992		
Mauritius	8 August 1985	23 February 1992 (CEDAW/C/MAR/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Mexico	3 September 1982	14 September 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.2)	Second (1983)
Mongolia	3 September 1982	18 November 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.20)	Fifth (1986)
Morocco	21 July 1994	14 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/MOR/1)	Sixteenth (1997)
Mozambique	16 May 1998		
Namibia	23 December 1993	4 November 1996 (CEDAW/C/NAM/1)	Seventeenth (1997)
Nepal	22 May 1992		
Netherlands	22 August 1992	19 November 1992 (CEDAW/C/NET/1) 17 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/NET/1/Add.1) 20 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/NET/1/Add.2) 9 October 1993 (CEDAW/C/NET/1/Add.3)	Thirteenth (1994)
New Zealand	9 February 1986	3 October 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.41)	Seventh (1988)
Nicaragua	26 November 1982	22 September 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.55)	Eighth (1989)
Nigeria	13 July 1986	1 April 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.49)	Seventh (1987)
Norway	3 September 1982	18 November 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.7)	Third (1984)
Pakistan	11 April 1997		
Panama	28 November 1982	12 December 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.9)	Fourth (1985)
Papua New Guinea	11 February 1996		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Paraguay	6 May 1988	4 June 1992 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2) 23 August 1995 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2/Add.1) 20 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2/Add.2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Peru	13 October 1983	14 September 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.60)	Ninth (1990)
Philippines	4 September 1982	22 October 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.6)	Third (1984)
Poland	3 September 1982	10 October 1985 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.31)	Sixth (1987)
Portugal	3 September 1982	19 July 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.21)	Fifth (1986)
Republic of Korea	26 January 1986	13 March 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.35)	Sixth (1987)
Republic of Moldova	31 July 1995		
Romania	6 February 1983	14 January 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.45)	Twelfth (1993)
Russian Federation	3 September 1982	2 March 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.12)	Second (1983)
Rwanda	3 September 1982	24 May 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.13)	Third (1984)
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1986		
Saint Lucia	7 November 1983		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1982	27 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3) 28 July 1994 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1)	Sixteenth (1997)
Samoa	25 October 1993		
Senegal	7 March 1986	5 November 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.42)	Seventh (1988)
Seychelles	4 June 1993		
Sierra Leone	11 December 1989		
Singapore	4 November 1996		
Slovakia	27 June 1994	29 April 1996 (CEDAW/C/SVK/1) 11 May 1998 (CEDAW/C/SVK/1/Add.1)	Nineteenth (1998)
Slovenia	5 August 1993	23 November 1993 (CEDAW/C/SVN/1)	Sixteenth (1997)
South Africa	14 January 1997	5 February 1998 (CEDAW/C/ZAF/1)	Nineteenth (1998)
Spain	4 February 1985	20 August 1985 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.30)	Sixth (1987)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Sri Lanka	4 November 1982	7 July 1985 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.29)	Sixth (1987)
Suriname	31 March 1994		
Sweden	3 September 1982	22 October 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.8)	Second (1983)
Switzerland	26 April 1998		
Tajikistan	25 October 1994		
Thailand	8 September 1986	1 June 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.51)	Ninth (1990)
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	17 February 1995		
Togo	26 October 1984		
Trinidad and Tobago	11 February 1991		
Tunisia	20 October 1986	17 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/TUN/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Turkey	19 January 1987	27 January 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.46)	Ninth (1990)
Turkmenistan	31 May 1998		
Uganda	21 August 1986	1 June 1992 (CEDAW/C/UGA/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Ukraine	3 September 1982	2 March 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.11)	Second (1983)
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 May 1987	25 June 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.52)	Ninth (1990)
United Republic of Tanzania	19 September 1986	9 March 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.57)	Ninth (1990)
Uruguay	8 November 1982	23 November 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.27)	Seventh (1988)
Uzbekistan	18 August 1996		
Vanuatu	8 October 1996		
Venezuela	1 June 1984	27 August 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.24)	Fifth (1986)
Viet Nam	19 March 1983	2 October 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.25)	Fifth (1986)
Yemen	29 June 1985	23 January 1989 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.61)	Twelfth (1993)
Yugoslavia	28 March 1983	3 November 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.18)	Fourth (1985)
Zambia	21 July 1986	6 March 1991 (CEDAW/C/ZAM/1-2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Zimbabwe	12 June 1992	28 April 1996 (CEDAW/C/ZWE/1)	Eighteenth (1998)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
B. Second periodic reports			
Angola	17 October 1991		
Antigua and Barbuda	31 August 1994	21 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Argentina	14 August 1990	13 February 1992 (CEDAW/C/ARG/2) 27 May 1994 (CEDAW/C/ARG/2/Add.1) 19 August 1994 (CEDAW/C/ARG/2/Add.2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Australia	27 August 1988	24 July 1992 (CEDAW/C/AUL/2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Austria	30 April 1987	18 December 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.27)	Tenth (1991)
Bangladesh	6 December 1989	23 February 1990 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.30)	Twelfth (1993)
Barbados	3 September 1986	4 December 1991 (CEDAW/C/BAR/2-3)	Thirteenth (1994)
Belarus	3 September 1986	3 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.5)	Eighth (1989)
Belgium	9 August 1990	9 February 1993 (CEDAW/C/BEL/2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Belize	15 June 1995	19 June 1996 (CEDAW/C/BLZ/1-2)	
Benin	11 April 1997		
Bhutan	30 September 1986		
Bolivia	8 July 1995		
Brazil	2 March 1989		
Bulgaria	10 March 1987	6 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/BGR/2-3)	Eighteenth (1998)
Burkina Faso	13 November 1992	11 December 1997 (CEDAW/C/BFA/2-3)	
Burundi	7 February 1997		
Cambodia	14 November 1997		
Canada	9 January 1987	20 January 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.11)	Ninth (1990)
Cape Verde	3 September 1986		
China	3 September 1986	22 June 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.26)	Eleventh (1992)
Chile	6 January 1995	9 March 1995 (CEDAW/C/CHI/2)	

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Colombia	18 February 1987	14 January 1993 (CEDAW/C/COL/2-3) 2 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/COL/2-3/Rev.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Congo	25 August 1987		
Costa Rica	4 May 1991		
Croatia	9 October 1997		
Cuba	3 September 1986	13 March 1992 (CEDAW/C/CUB/2-3) 30 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/CUB/2-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Cyprus	22 August 1990	2 February 1994 (CEDAW/C/CYP/1-2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Czech Republic	24 March 1998		
Democratic Republic of the Congo[a]	16 November 1991	24 October 1996 (CEDAW/C/ZAR/2)	
Denmark	21 May 1988	2 June 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.14)	Tenth (1991)
Dominica	3 September 1986		
Dominican Republic	2 October 1987	26 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/DOM/2-3)	Eighteenth (1998)
Ecuador	9 December 1986	28 May 1990 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.31)	Thirteenth (1994)
Egypt	18 October 1986	19 December 1986 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.2)	Ninth (1990)
El Salvador	18 September 1986	18 December 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.12)	Eleventh (1992)
Equatorial Guinea	22 November 1989	6 January 1994 (CEDAW/C/GNQ/2-3)	
Estonia	20 November 1996		
Ethiopia	10 October 1986	22 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3) 16 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Finland	4 October 1991	9 February 1993 (CEDAW/C/FIN/2)	Fourteenth (1995)
France	13 January 1989	10 December 1990 (CEDAW/C/FRA/2 and Rev.1)	Twelfth (1993)
Gabon	20 February 1988		
Gambia	16 May 1998		
Germany	9 August 1990	8 October 1996 (CEDAW/C/DEU/2-3)	
Ghana	1 February 1991	29 January 1991 (CEDAW/C/GHA/1-2)	Eleventh (1992)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Greece	7 July 1988	1 March 1996 (CEDAW/C/GRC/2-3)	
Grenada	29 September 1995		
Guatemala	11 September 1987	2 April 1991 (CEDAW/C/GUA/1-2 and Corr.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
		7 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/GUA/1-2/ Amend.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Guinea	8 September 1987		
Guinea-Bissau	22 September 1990		
Guyana	3 September 1986		
Haiti	3 September 1986		
Honduras	2 April 1988	28 October 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.9)	Eleventh (1992)
Hungary	3 September 1986	29 September 1986 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.1)	Seventh (1988)
Iceland	18 July 1990	5 May 1993 (CEDAW/C/ICE/1-2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Indonesia	13 October 1989	6 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/IDN/2-3)	Eighteenth (1998)
Iraq	12 September 1991		
Ireland	22 January 1991	6 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/IRL/2-3)	
Israel	2 November 1996	7 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/ISR/1-2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Italy	10 July 1990	1 March 1994 (CEDAW/C/ITA/2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Jamaica	18 November 1989	17 Feburary 1998 (CEDAW/C/JAM/2-4)	
Japan	25 July 1990	21 February 1992 (CEDAW/C/JPN/2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Jordan	31 July 1997		
Kenya	8 April 1989	4 December 1990 (CEDAW/C/KEN/1-2)	Twelfth (1993)
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1986		
Latvia	14 May 1997		
Liberia	16 August 1989		
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	15 June 1994		
Luxembourg	4 March 1994	8 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/LUX/2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Madagascar	16 April 1994		
Malawi	11 April 1992		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Maldives	1 July 1998		
Mali	10 October 1990		
Malta	7 April 1996		
Mauritius	8 August 1989	23 February 1992 (CEDAW/C/MAR/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Mexico	3 September 1986	3 December 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.10)	Ninth (1990)
Mongolia	3 September 1986	17 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.7)	Ninth (1990)
Namibia	23 December 1997		
Nepal	22 May 1996		
Netherlands	22 August 1996		
New Zealand	9 February 1990	3 November 1992 (CEDAW/C/NZE/2) 27 October 1993 (CEDAW/C/NZE/2/Add.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Nicaragua	26 November 1986	16 March 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.20)	Twelfth (1993)
Nigeria	13 July 1990	13 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/NGA/2-3)	Nineteenth (1998)
Norway	3 September 1986	23 June 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.15)	Tenth (1991)
Panama	28 November 1986	17 January 1997 (CEDAW/C/PAN/2-3)	Nineteenth (1998)
Paraguay	6 May 1992	4 June 1992 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2) 23 August 1995 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2/Add.1) 20 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2/Add.2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Peru	13 October 1987	13 February 1990 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.29)	Fourteenth (1995)
Philippines	4 September 1986	12 December 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.17)	Tenth (1991)
Poland	3 September 1986	17 November 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.16)	Tenth (1991)
Portugal	3 September 1986	18 May 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.22)	Tenth (1991)
Republic of Korea	26 January 1990	19 December 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.28 and Corr.1)	Twelfth (1993)
Romania	6 February 1987	19 October 1992 (CEDAW/C/ROM/2-3)	Twelfth (1993)
Russian Federation	3 September 1986	10 February 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.4)	Eighth (1989)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Rwanda	3 September 1986	7 March 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.13)	Tenth (1991)
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1990		
Saint Lucia	7 November 1987		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1986	27 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3) 28 July 1994 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1)	Sixteenth (1997)
Samoa	25 October 1997		
Senegal	7 March 1990	23 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/SEN/2 and Amend.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Seychelles	4 June 1997		
Sierra Leone	11 December 1993		
Slovakia	27 June 1998		
Slovenia	5 August 1997		
Spain	4 February 1989	9 February 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.19)	Eleventh (1992)
Sri Lanka	4 November 1986	29 December 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.18)	Eleventh (1992)
Suriname	31 March 1998		
Sweden	3 September 1986	10 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.6)	Seventh (1988)
Thailand	8 September 1990	3 March 1997 (CEDAW/C/THA/2-3)	
Togo	26 October 1988		
Trinidad and Tobago	11 February 1995		
Tunisia	20 October 1990	17 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/TUN/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Turkey	19 January 1991	7 February 1994[b] 3 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/TUR/2-3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Uganda	21 August 1990	1 June 1992 (CEDAW/C/UGA/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Ukraine	3 September 1986	13 August 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.8)	Ninth (1990)
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 May 1991	11 May 1991 (CEDAW/C/UK/2 and Amend.1)	Twelfth (1993)
United Republic of Tanzania	19 September 1990	25 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/TZA/2-3)	Nineteenth (1998)
Uruguay	8 November 1986	3 February 1998 (CEDAW/C/URY/2-3)	
Venezuela	1 June 1988	18 April 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.21)	Eleventh (1992)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Viet Nam	19 March 1987		
Yemen	29 June 1989	8 June 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.24 and Amend.1)	Twelfth (1993)
Yugoslavia	28 March 1987	31 May 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.23)	Tenth (1991)
Zambia	21 July 1990	6 March 1991 (CEDAW/C/ZAM/1-2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Zimbabwe	12 June 1996		
C. Third periodic reports			
Angola	17 October 1995		
Antigua and Barbuda	31 August 1998	21 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Argentina	14 August 1994	1 October 1996 (CEDAW/C/ARG/3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Australia	27 August 1992	1 March 1995 (CEDAW/C/AUL/3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Austria	30 April 1991	25 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/AUT/3-4)	
Bangladesh	6 December 1993	26 January 1993[b] 27 March 1997 (CEDAW/C/BGD/3-4)	Seventeenth (1997)
Barbados	3 September 1990	4 December 1991 (CEDAW/C/BAR/2-3)	Thirteenth (1994)
Belarus	3 September 1990	1 July 1993 (CEDAW/C/BLR/3)	
Belgium	9 August 1994		
Bhutan	30 September 1990		
Brazil	2 March 1993		
Bulgaria	10 March 1991	6 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/BGR/2-3)	Eighteenth (1998)
Burkina Faso	13 November 1996	11 December 1997 (CEDAW/C/BFA/2-3)	
Canada	9 January 1991	9 September 1992 (CEDAW/C/CAN/3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Cape Verde	3 September 1990		
China	3 September 1990	29 May 1997 (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4)	
Colombia	18 February 1991	14 January 1993 (CEDAW/C/COL/2-3)	
		2 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/COL/2-3/Rev.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Congo	25 August 1991		
Costa Rica	4 May 1995		

States parties	*Date due*[c]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Cuba	3 September 1990	13 March 1992 (CEDAW/C/CUB/2-3) 30 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/CUB/2-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Cyprus	22 August 1994		
Democratic Republic of the Congo[a]	16 November 1995	2 July 1998 (CEDAW/C/COD/3)	
Denmark	21 May 1992	7 May 1993 (CEDAW/C/DEN/3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Dominica	3 September 1990		
Dominican Republic	2 October 1991	26 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/DOM/2-3)	Eighteenth (1998)
Ecuador	9 December 1990	23 December 1991 (CEDAW/C/ECU/3)	Thirteenth (1994)
Egypt	18 October 1990	30 January 1996 (CEDAW/C/EGY/3)	
El Salvador	18 September 1990		
Equatorial Guinea	22 November 1993	6 January 1994 (CEDAW/C/GNQ/2-3)	
Ethiopia	10 October 1990	22 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3) 16 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Finland	4 October 1995	28 January 1997 (CEDAW/C/FIN/3)	
France	13 January 1993		
Gabon	20 February 1992		
Germany	9 August 1994	8 October 1996 (CEDAW/C/DEU/2-3)	
Ghana	1 February 1995		
Greece	7 July 1992	1 March 1996 (CEDAW/C/GRC/2-3)	
Guatemala	11 September 1991		
Guinea	8 September 1991		
Guinea-Bissau	22 September 1994		
Guyana	3 September 1990		
Haiti	3 September 1990		
Honduras	2 April 1992	31 May 1991 (CEDAW/C/HON/3)	Eleventh (1992)
Hungary	3 September 1990	4 April 1991 (CEDAW/C/HUN/3) 3 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/HUN/3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Iceland	3 July 1994		
Indonesia	13 October 1993	6 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/IDN/2-3)	Eighteenth (1998)
Iraq	12 September 1995		
Ireland	22 January 1995	7 August 1997 (CEDAW/C/IRL/2-3)	
Italy	10 July 1994	21 June 1997 (CEDAW/C/ITA/3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Jamaica	18 November 1993	17 February 1998 (CEDAW/C/JAM/2-4)	
Japan	25 July 1994	28 October 1993 (CEDAW/C/JPN/3)	Thirteenth (1994)
Kenya	8 April 1993		
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1990		
Liberia	16 August 1993		
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	15 June 1998		
Luxembourg	4 March 1998	12 March 1998 (CEDAW/C/LUX/3) 17 June 1998 (CEDAW/C/LUX/3/Add.1)	
Madagascar	16 April 1998		
Malawi	11 April 1996		
Mali	10 October 1994		
Mauritius	8 August 1993		
Mexico	3 September 1990	7 March 1997[b] (CEDAW/C/MEX/3-4)	Eighteenth (1998)
Mongolia	3 September 1990		
New Zealand	9 February 1994	2 March 1998 (CEDAW/C/NZL/3-4) 15 April 1998 (CEDAW/C/NZL/3-4/Add.1)	Nineteenth (1998)
Nicaragua	26 November 1990	15 October 1992 (CEDAW/C/NIC/3)	Twelfth (1993)
Nigeria	13 July 1994	13 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/NGA/2-3)	Nineteenth (1998)
Norway	3 September 1990	25 January 1991 (CEDAW/C/NOR/3)	Fourteenth (1995)
Panama	28 November 1990	17 January 1997 (CEDAW/C/PAN/2-3)	Nineteenth (1998)
Paraguay	6 May 1996		
Peru	13 October 1991	25 November 1994 (CEDAW/C/PER/3-4)	Nineteenth (1998)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Philippines	4 September 1990	20 January 1993 (CEDAW/C/PHI/3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Poland	3 September 1990	22 November 1990 (CEDAW/C/18/Add.2)	Tenth (1991)
Portugal	3 September 1990	10 December 1990 (CEDAW/C/18/Add.3)	Tenth (1991)
Republic of Korea	26 January 1994	8 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/KOR/3)	Nineteenth (1998)
Romania	6 February 1991	19 October 1992 (CEDAW/C/ROM/2-3)	Twelfth (1993)
Russian Federation	3 September 1990	24 July 1991 (CEDAW/C/USR/3)	Fourteenth (1995)
Rwanda	3 September 1990	18 January 1991 (CEDAW/C/RWA/3)	Twelfth (1993)
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1994		
Saint Lucia	7 November 1991		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1990	27 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3) 28 July 1994 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1)	Sixteenth (1997)
Senegal	7 March 1994		
Sierra Leone	11 December 1997		
Spain	4 February 1993	20 May 1996 (CEDAW/C/ESP/3)	
Sri Lanka	4 November 1990		
Sweden	3 September 1990	3 October 1990 (CEDAW/C/18/Add.1)	Twelfth (1993)
Thailand	8 September 1994	3 March 1997 (CEDAW/C/THA/2-3)	
Togo	26 October 1992		
Tunisia	20 October 1994		
Turkey	19 January 1995	3 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/TUR/2-3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Uganda	21 August 1994		
Ukraine	3 September 1990	31 May 1991 (CEDAW/C/UKR/3) 21 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/UKR/3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 May 1995	16 August 1995 (CEDAW/C/UK/3) 8 August 1997 (CEDAW/C/UK/3/Add.1)	
United Republic of Tanzania	19 September 1994	25 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/TZA/2-3)	Nineteenth (1998)

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Uruguay	8 November 1990	3 February 1998 (CEDAW/C/URY/2-3)	
Venezuela	1 June 1992	8 February 1995 (CEDAW/C/VEN/3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Viet Nam	19 March 1991		
Yemen	29 June 1993	13 November 1992 (CEDAW/C/YEM/3)	Twelfth (1993)
Yugoslavia	28 March 1991		
Zambia	21 July 1994		
D. Fourth periodic reports			
Australia	27 August 1996		
Austria	30 April 1995	25 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/AUT/3-4)	
Bangladesh	6 December 1997	27 March 1997 (CEDAW/C/BGD/3-4)	Seventeenth (1997)
Barbados	3 September 1994		
Belarus	3 September 1994		
Bhutan	30 September 1994		
Brazil	2 March 1997		
Bulgaria	10 March 1995		
Canada	9 January 1995	2 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/CAN/4)	Sixteenth (1997)
Cape Verde	3 September 1994		
China	3 September 1994	29 May 1997 (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4)	
Colombia	18 February 1995	8 July 1997 (CEDAW/C/COL/4)	
Congo	25 August 1995		
Cuba	3 September 1994		
Denmark	21 May 1996	9 January 1997 (CEDAW/C/DEN/4)	
Dominica	3 September 1994		
Dominican Republic	2 October 1995	29 October 1997 (CEDAW/C/DOM/4)	Eighteenth (1998)
Ecuador	9 December 1994		
Egypt	18 October 1994		
El Salvador	18 October 1994		
Equatorial Guinea	22 November 1997		
Ethiopia	10 October 1994		

States parties	Date due[a]	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
France	13 January 1997		
Gabon	20 February 1996		
Greece	7 July 1996		
Guatemala	11 September 1995		
Guinea	8 September 1995		
Guyana	3 September 1994		
Haiti	3 September 1994		
Honduras	2 April 1996		
Hungary	3 September 1994		
Iceland	3 July 1998		
Italy	10 July 1998		
Indonesia	13 October 1997		
Jamaica	18 November 1997	17 February 1998 (CEDAW/C/JAM/2-4)	
Kenya	8 April 1997		
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1994		
Liberia	16 August 1997		
Mauritius	8 August 1997		
Mexico	3 September 1994	7 March 1997[b] (CEDAW/C/MEX/3-4)	Eighteenth (1998)
Mongolia	3 September 1994		
New Zealand	9 February 1998	2 March 1998 (CEDAW/C/NZL/3-4) 15 April 1998 (CEDAW/C/NZL/3-4)	Nineteenth (1998)
Nicaragua	26 November 1994	16 June 1998 (CEDAW/C/NIC/4)	
Norway	3 September 1994	1 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/NOR/4)	Fourteenth (1995)
Panama	28 November 1994		
Peru	13 October 1995	25 November 1994 (CEDAW/C/PER/3-4)	Nineteenth (1998)
Philippines	4 September 1994	22 April 1996 (CEDAW/C/PHI/4)	Sixteenth (1997)
Poland	3 September 1994		
Portugal	3 September 1994		
Republic of Korea	26 January 1998	27 March 1998 (CEDAW/C/KOR/4)	Nineteenth (1998)
Romania	6 February 1995		

States parties	*Date due*[a]	*Date of submission*	*Considered by Committee (session (year))*
Russian Federation	3 September 1994	31 August 1994 (CEDAW/C/USR/4)	Fourteenth (1995)
Rwanda	3 September 1994		
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1998		
Saint Lucia	7 November 1995		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1994		
Senegal	7 March 1998		
Spain	4 February 1997		
Sri Lanka	4 November 1994		
Sweden	3 September 1994	21 May 1996 (CEDAW/C/SWE/4)	
Togo	26 October 1996		
Ukraine	3 November 1994		
Uruguay	8 November 1994		
Venezuela	1 June 1996		
Viet Nam	19 March 1995		
Yemen	29 June 1997		
Yugoslavia	28 March 1995		
E. Reports submitted on an exceptional basis			
Bosnia and Herzegovina		1 February 1994 (oral report, see CEDAW/C/SR.253)	**Thirteenth (1994)**
Democratic Republic of the Congo[a]		16 January 1997 (oral report, see CEDAW/C/SR.317)	**Sixteenth (1997)**
Croatia		15 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/CRO/SP.1)	**Fourteenth (1995)**
Rwanda		31 January 1996 (oral report, see CEDAW/C/SR.306)	**Fifteenth (1996)**
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)		2 December 1993 (CEDAW/C/YUG/SP.1) 2 February 1994 (oral report, see CEDAW/C/SR.254)	**Thirteenth (1994)**

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[a] One year prior to the due date, the Secretary-General invites the State party to submit its report.

[b] Report withdrawn.